



SINK OR SWIM

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

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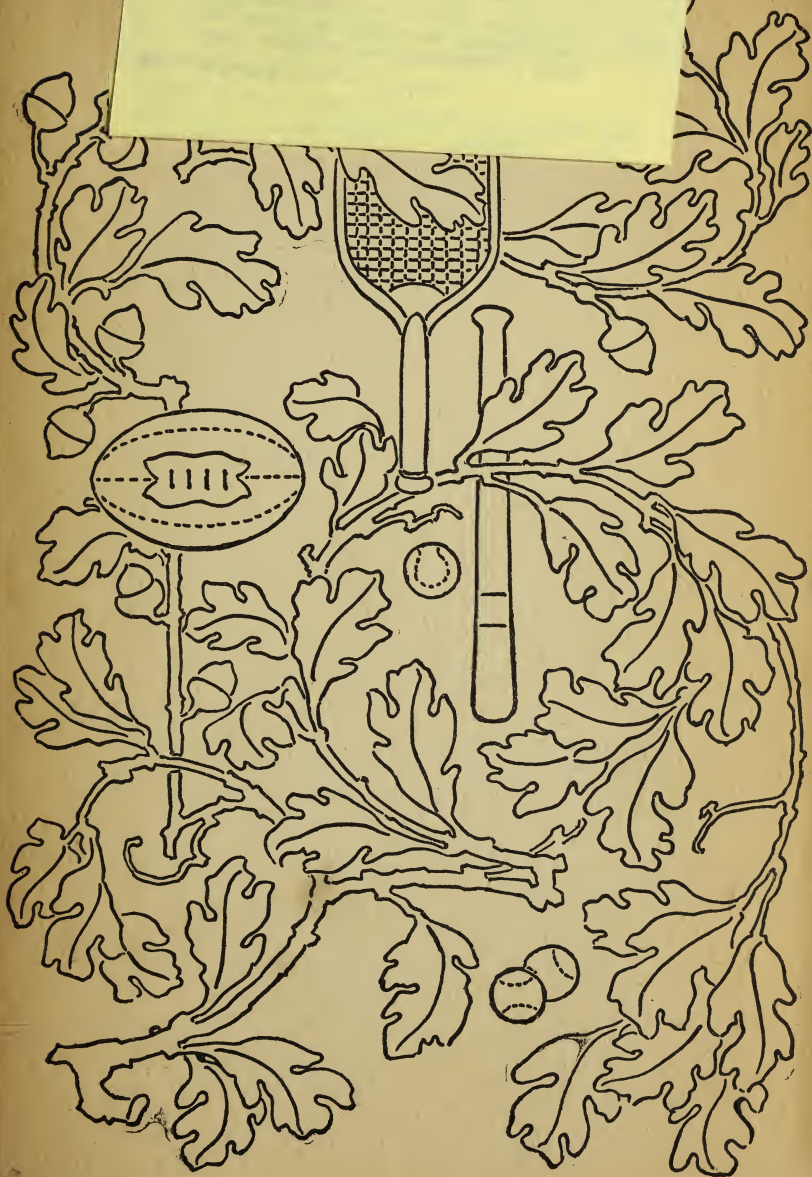
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“Harry Raymond, manager of the New York branch
of Lindsey & Company of London, England.”

SINK OR SWIM

OR

HARRY RAYMOND'S RESOLVE

BY

HORATIO ALGER, JR.

AUTHOR OF

"STRONG AND STEADY," "STRIVE AND SUCCEED," "TRY AND TRUST,"

"BOUND TO RISE," "BRAVE AND BOLD," "DO AND DARE,"

"WAIT AND HOPE," "SLOW AND SURE,"

"THE CASH BOY," ETC.



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BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

HORATIO ALGER, JR., an author who lived among and for boys and himself remained a boy in heart and association till death, was born at Revere, Mass., January 13, 1834. He was the son of a clergyman; was graduated at Harvard College in 1852, and at its Divinity School in 1860; and was pastor of the Unitarian Church at Brewster, Mass., in 1862-66.

In the latter year he settled in New York and began drawing public attention to the condition and needs of street boys. He mingled with them, gained their confidence, showed a personal concern in their affairs, and stimulated them to honest and useful living. With his first story he won the hearts of all red-blooded boys everywhere, and of the seventy or more that followed over a million copies were sold during the author's lifetime.

In his later life he was in appearance a short, stout, bald-headed man, with cordial manners and whimsical views of things that amused all who met him. He died at Natick, Mass., July 18, 1899.

Mr. Alger's stories are as popular now as when first published, because they treat of real live boys who were always up and about—just like the boys found everywhere to-day. They are pure in tone and inspiring in influence, and many reforms in the juvenile life of New York may be traced to them. Among the best known are:

Strong and Steady; Strive and Succeed; Try and Trust; Bound to Rise; Risen from the Ranks; Herbert Carter's Legacy; Brave and Bold; Jack's Ward; Shifting for Himself; Wait and Hope; Paul the Peddler; Phil the Fiddler; Slow and Sure; Julius the Street Boy; Tom the Bootblack; Struggling Upward; Facing the World; The Cash Boy; Making His Way; Tony the Tramp; Joe's Luck; Do and Dare; Only an Irish Boy; Sink or Swim; A Cousin's Conspiracy; Andy Gordon; Bob Burton; Harry Vane; Hector's Inheritance; Mark Mason's Triumph; Sam's Chance; The Telegraph Boy; The Young Adventurer; The Young Outlaw; The Young Salesman, and Luke Walton.

SINK OR SWIM

CHAPTER I

THE VERNON HIGH SCHOOL

"SINK or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote."

These words were declaimed in a clear, ringing voice from the platform of the Vernon High School. The speaker was a boy of fifteen, well-knit and vigorous, with a frank, manly expression, and a prepossessing face. His dark intellectual brow, and his attitude, as he faced his schoolmates, was one of ease and unconscious grace. He had learned the orator's secret—to be in earnest—and he carried his audience with him. When he bowed and walked to his desk, the boys broke into spontaneous applause. Though this was contrary to the rules of the school, Reuben Tower, A.M., the principal, uttered no reprimand.

"Very well indeed, Master Raymond! You speak as if you felt it," he said.

Harry Raymond looked gratified at this double commendation. The applause of his schoolmates pleased him, for he was by no means indifferent to their good opinion, which he tried on all occasions to deserve. He was no less pleased with Mr. Tower's praise, for he had a high respect for his ability, and that praise was never lightly bestowed.

I have spoken of Harry's good appearance. I am obliged to confess that his dress had nothing to do with this. In fact, his jacket and pants were of very coarse texture, and by no means elegant in fit. Harry was the son of a house carpenter—an industrious and intelligent

man, but obliged to economize strictly in order to lay aside a hundred dollars a year as a provision for the future.

The applause which followed our hero's declamation was almost unanimous. I say *almost*, for there were two boys who did not join in it. One of these was James Turner, a boy about Harry's age, the son of Squire Turner, the wealthiest man in Vernon. His dress afforded quite a contrast to the ill-fitting garments of our young hero. James had accompanied his father to New York, where his measure had been left with a Broadway tailor, who had made up the suit and sent it to Vernon by express. The cloth was very fine, and there was a style and neatness of fit about the clothes of which James felt proud. He regarded his companions with a supercilious air, as if convinced of his own immeasurable superiority, in dress at least.

There was another boy, sitting next to James, who also refrained from joining in the applause. This was Tom Barton, a friend and hanger-on of James Turner, who, by persistent flattery, earned the privilege of being treated with half-contemptuous familiarity and condescension by the young aristocrat. He knew that James did not like Harry Raymond, and the sneer which he saw on the lips of his patron gave him the cue. He attempted to imitate it, and gaze scornfully at the young orator in his momentary triumph.

"James Turner!" called out the principal.

James had selected a good piece—Patrick Henry's well-known appeal to arms, familiar to every schoolboy, commencing, "I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience."

It is a fine piece of oratory, lofty in tone and sentiment, and should be spoken with dignified earnestness. James Turner's voice, which was shrill, was scarcely calculated to do justice to it. When he came to the clause, "We

have prostrated ourselves before the throne," he suited the action to the word, and sank upon his knees. But, afraid of soiling his pantaloons, he first spread out his silk handkerchief on the platform, and this spoiled whatever effect the action might otherwise have had. There was a general titter, which the young aristocrat saw with anger.

But a more serious *contretemps* awaited him. A little further on, the orator says, "We have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne." Here again, James, with a striking lack of judgment, thought it would heighten the effect to suit the action to the word. Accordingly, he prepared to kick out with his right foot. Unfortunately, he was so provoked with his schoolmates, for their lack of appreciation of the other point he had made, that he executed the manœuvre, if it may properly be so-called, with a spiteful emphasis which was too much for his equilibrium. He lost his balance, and fell forward in a ludicrous manner, and rolled over on the floor of the schoolroom.

There was a wild burst of laughter, in which, after an ineffectual attempt to resist the infection, Mr. Tower himself was compelled to join. Boys laughed till the tears came into their eyes, and the merriment was only increased when James Turner rose to his feet, and with an air of offended majesty marched indignantly to his seat, darting a look of withering scorn, as he meant it to be, at his youthful audience.

The principal, however, quickly recovered himself, and said:

"Boys, that will do. Turner, you must excuse the boys for a little good-natured merriment at your expense. I think your conception of the gestures proper to use with your piece is not quite correct. Your intention was good, though the effect was injured by circumstances."

These remarks ought to have appeased the offended orator, but he evidently did not mean to be appeased so

readily. His feeling of mortification was swallowed up in a greater feeling of anger and irritation at the presumption of his schoolmates, in daring to laugh at him, the son of the richest man in Vernon.

When the speaking was over, Mr. Tower rose and said:

"Boys, you are aware that at the commencement of the term I offered a prize to the boy who, in your own judgment, should be pronounced to have succeeded best in declamation, taking into consideration the whole term. As this is the last time we shall declaim before vacation, I will call for the vote now."

Slips of paper were accordingly distributed, and the boys were soon busy in recording their votes.

"Sheffield, you may collect the votes," said Mr. Turner.

The count over, he rapped on his desk.

"Boys," he said, "I will announce the vote. Votes cast, fifty. Of these Walter Sheffield has one; James Turner, two, and the remainder, forty-seven in number, are for Harry Raymond, to whom I have great pleasure in awarding the prize, of which he has been pronounced worthy by the nearly unanimous vote of his schoolmates. Raymond, you will come forward."

Harry Raymond advanced toward the teacher's desk, amid the loud applause of his companions.

Mr. Tower placed in his hands a handsomely bound volume, consisting of selections from the best efforts of orators, ancient and modern, saying:

"I have great pleasure in giving you this volume, Raymond, for my own judgment approves the selection of your school fellows. I trust you will be able to express in your life, as you have so appropriately done upon the platform, the lofty sentiments of our best orators."

There was a flush of gratification upon our hero's cheek, as he received the book with a respectful bow, and returned to his seat, amid the renewed applause of his fellow-pupils.

CHAPTER II

SOUR GRAPES

HARRY RAYMOND lived in a small house, just off the main street, fronting on a narrow road or lane. The building lot, consisting of an acre of land, his father had bought three years before for one hundred and fifty dollars. After paying for it cash down, he found that he had but one hundred dollars left toward the house which he wanted to build. Under these circumstances he went to Squire Turner and asked for a loan. Knowing that his money would be safe, the squire agreed to furnish him what money he might need toward the house, taking a mortgage upon it when it was completed.

Mr. Raymond, therefore, at once commenced building. His house cost a thousand dollars, of which Squire Turner furnished him seven hundred, the balance being made up of his own labor and cash in hand. So, when all was done, he regarded himself as worth a property of twelve hundred dollars, subject to a mortgage of seven hundred. During the three years that had since elapsed he had managed, besides paying interest, to pay up three hundred dollars of the mortgage.

Besides Harry, there was his sister Katy, a little girl of ten, sweet and winning in her ways, to whom he was warmly attached.

Mr. Raymond had kept Harry steadily at school, feeling that a good education would be of far more value to him in after life than the small amount he might earn if kept at work. Harry had justified this determination, having acquitted himself on all occasions most creditably in all the studies which he pursued. Out of school he found time to work in the garden, and assist in various ways, by sawing and splitting what wood was required for

family use, so that his father, on returning from his day's labor was not under the necessity of fatiguing himself by extra work.

When school was dismissed Harry Raymond was surrounded by his friends.

"I congratulate you, Harry," said Walter Sheffield, good-naturedly, "which is doing the handsome thing, considering that I was your rival. You only had forty-six more votes than I."

"You voted for yourself, didn't you, Sheffield?" said Will Pomeroy.

"I'm not going to expose myself, if I did."

"Shouldn't wonder if Turner voted for himself," said one of the boys, in a low voice.

"But he had two votes."

"Oh, Tom Barton cast the other vote, of course," said Will Pomeroy.

"Say, Turner, did you vote for yourself?" called out one of the boys.

"None of your business," said James Turner.

He stood a little on one side with his crony, Tom Barton, surveying the scene with an ill-tempered scowl. In fact, he hated our hero, for no good reason except that Harry was his acknowledged superior in acquirements.

"Why don't you come and congratulate Raymond on his prize?"

"I'd rather congratulate him on his pantaloons," said James, with a sneer.

"What's the matter with them?"

"Patches seem to be in fashion," said James.

Of course the attention of all the boys was attracted to Harry's knee, and the patch, which had hitherto escaped observation, was discovered.

Harry Raymond's cheek flushed, for he saw that an insult was intended, but he did not at once speak.

"For shame, Turner!" said Will Pomeroy, indig-

nantly, and it was evident that the other boys sympathized with him in his feeling.

"What should I be ashamed of?"

"For your meanness in twitting Harry with the patch."

"I didn't; I only mentioned it."

"You are envious because he got the prize."

"What do I care for the trumpery prize? It didn't cost more than a dollar and a half. My father will buy me a dozen such books if I want them."

"Perhaps he will; but for all that you'd have taken it quick enough if you could have got it. It isn't the value of the book, it's what it means."

"What does it mean?"

"That Harry Raymond is the best speaker in the Vernon High School."

"Boys," said Harry, quietly, "don't trouble yourselves to defend me. I don't care what James Turner says. Perhaps the book didn't cost more than a dollar and a half, but it was given me by your votes, and that makes it worth more to me than if it cost a hundred dollars."

"Three cheers for Harry Raymond!" called out Walter Sheffield, waving his arm, and giving the signal.

The three cheers were given with a will.

"Now three groans for James Turner!"

"No, boys," said Harry, promptly; "don't do that."

"But he insulted you."

"I suppose you mean about the patch. But never mind about that. If I get my clothes torn, I can't afford to throw them aside. I don't like patches better than anybody else, but till I get richer I shall wear them."

Harry spoke so manfully that the boys heartily sympathized with him. It might have been supposed that James Turner would have been convinced of his meanness, and ashamed of it; but he was essentially a mean boy, and it

may be added that a part of his meanness came to him from his father, who, though a rich man, was sordid and covetous. So James now could not refrain from a parting sneer.

"If Raymond wears patches because he is poor," he said, "I'll give him a pair of pants that I've got through wearing, any time when he'll come up to the house."

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Harry, angry at the insult. "When I want your cast-off clothes I'll let you know. I'll go in rags first."

"Just as you choose," said James. "There's no accounting for tastes. Come along, Barton."

The two boys walked away, not much regretted by those they left behind.

"The beggarly upstart!" said James to his companion. "He puts on airs enough for a pauper."

"So he does," said Barton. "He can't speak half as well as you. But Mr. Tower's prejudiced."

"I don't care for his miserable prizes," said James. "They're not worth thinking of."

It was only another illustration of the well-known fable of the fox and the grapes.

CHAPTER III

A SUDDEN BLOW

HARRY RAYMOND, after receiving the congratulations of his schoolmates, took his way homeward by a short cut across the field.

"See what I've got, mother," said Harry, holding up his prize.

"What is it, Harry?"

"It's the prize for declamation. The boys took a vote, and it was awarded to me by forty-seven votes out of fifty."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Who were the three boys that didn't vote for you?" asked Katy.

"I was one of them," said Harry, smiling.

"Who did you vote for?"

"For Walter Sheffield."

"Who got the other two votes?"

"James Turner."

"He's an awful disagreeable boy," said Katy. "He puts on all sorts of airs just because his father is rich. I wish father was as rich as Squire Turner."

"Perhaps you'd like to have him for a father?"

"No, I shouldn't," said Katy, quickly. "He's just as bad for a man as James is for a boy."

"So, you see, money isn't everything," said her mother.

There was a deeper meaning in these words than her children knew. As a girl, Mrs. Raymond had been very handsome, and even now, at the age of thirty-six, she retained much of her good looks. It was not generally known that Squire Turner had been an aspirant for her hand. But though he was even then rich, she quietly rejected his suit, and accepted Mr. Raymond, a journeyman carpenter, with less than a hundred dollars.

Squire Turner was not a forgiving man, and his resentment was bitter, though he did not choose to show it publicly. But none the less he nursed his anger, and waited patiently for an opportunity to repay, by some grievous injury, the wrong which he fancied he had suffered. He married a Miss Ellis, a sharp-tempered spinster from a neighboring town, whose only redeeming point was the possession of ten thousand dollars in her own right. Her husband cared nothing for her, but only for her money, and the marriage was far from being a happy one. Domestic dissension and almost continual wrangling were what James had witnessed from his babyhood up to the time of his mother's death, a year previous; and perhaps

it is not surprising that the son of such parents should have been unpopular, and possessed of disagreeable traits.

Yet Mr. Raymond had applied to Squire Turner for money to assist him in building his house. The squire had two objects in granting this request. First, the security was ample, and the investment a good one; and, secondly, a debtor is always to some extent in the power of his creditor.

"What piece did you speak to-day, Harry?" asked his mother.

"The supposed speech of John Adams. You remember how it begins: 'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote.'"

"Yes, I remember it."

"I have been thinking, mother," continued Harry, "that I shall take my motto from it."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this: Sink or swim, I am going to do my duty, and try to succeed in life. I am not going to be frightened by obstacles, but am going to push on as well as I can."

"It's a good motto, Harry. I hope you'll have strength to adhere to it."

"I think I'll go out and split a little wood, now, mother."

"I wish you would. I always burn a good deal on ironing days."

At half-past five Harry re-entered the house.

"Isn't supper ready, mother?" he asked.

"Yes, Harry, it is ready; but your father has not got home yet. I have been waiting for him."

"Where is he at work?"

"On Doctor Lamson's house, just across the railroad. The doctor is in a hurry to get it finished as soon as possible, and perhaps the carpenters are working extra hours."

Not a shadow of apprehension was in Mrs. Raymond's mind as she spoke, but already a heavy calamity had fallen upon her.

Six o'clock came, and Mr. Raymond had not returned.

"I think you had better sit down to tea, children," said their mother. "I am not very hungry, and I will wait for your father."

Another hour passed away.

"I wonder your father does not come," said Mrs. Raymond, with a little vague restlessness, which had not yet been converted into anxiety. "He has not often been so late as this, without telling me beforehand that he meant to stay away."

"I think I will go out and meet him," said Harry.

To this Mrs. Raymond made no objection, feeling rather relieved by the proposal of her son.

Harry walked slowly up the road in the direction of his father's probable return. He strained his eyes to see through the gathering twilight, but could see nothing of his father. Rather surprised at this, he kept on, until he happened to meet in the street Hiram Payson, who he knew had also been employed on Doctor Lamson's house.

"Good evening, Mr. Payson," he said.

"Good evening, Harry; where are you going? To the store?"

"No; I thought I would come out and see if I could meet my father."

"Meet your father? Why, where has he gone?"

"He hasn't got home from work yet. Did you start before him?"

"No; he started before me."

"He did!" exclaimed Harry, in surprise. "What time was that?"

"About five o'clock. I know it was not later than that."

"Where can he be?"

"I'll tell you what, Harry," said Hiram Payson, "if you are going to look for him, I'll join you."

"Thank you, Mr. Payson. I wish you would."

The two pushed on in the direction of Doctor Lamson's new house. They reached the railroad, and, as if by mutual consent, paused and looked about them.

"Your father sometimes walks on the railroad a little distance, as far as Carter's pasture. Perhaps we had better take that way."

Harry assented. There was a scared look on his face, and a fear which he did not dare to define to himself.

It was realized all too soon. About fifty rods distant, they came upon the mangled remains of his father lying stretched across the track. His hearing had been affected by a fever, which he had three years previous. It was evident that as he was walking on the track, the train sweeping round a curve had come upon him unawares, and his life was the forfeit. Harry uttered one shriek of horror, and sank down beside his father's body, now cold in death.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER THE FUNERAL

THE grief of Mrs. Raymond and her two children for the death of the husband and father was very sharp and poignant. Had he died at home of some lingering illness, their minds would have been prepared in some measure for the stroke. But, cut off as he was in an instant, the blow fell upon them very heavily.

On the third day after the body was found the funeral took place. Harry attended as chief mourner, for his mother was compelled to remain at home on account of illness. But when the funeral was over other cares forced themselves upon their attention.

They were gathered in the little sitting-room one even-

ing about a week after Mr. Raymond's death. Mrs. Raymond was looking sad and pale, while Harry's face was sober and earnest. He already began to realize that his father's responsibilities had fallen on his young shoulders.

"It is time, mother," he said, "that we began to talk about our future plans."

"I am sure I don't know what we shall do," said his mother, sighing.

"Whatever we do, mother, we won't despond. There are a great many ways of getting a living, and I know that we shall get along somehow."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Raymond, dubiously.

"Do you remember that piece I spoke the other day?"

"The one you got the prize for, Harry?" said his sister.

"It wasn't for that only, but for speaking the whole term. The piece began with 'Sink or Swim;' and I told you then that I meant to take that for my motto."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"I mean this, mother," said Harry, with energy, "that, sink or swim, I am going to do my best; and if I do that, I think it'll be swim and not sink."

"But you are so young, Harry," said his mother.

"I am fifteen," said Harry, drawing himself up. "I am well and strong, and I can work."

"Do you think you could build houses, Harry?" asked Katy.

"None that would be worth living in," he said, smiling. "I don't mean to be a carpenter. It would take too long to learn, and the pay is never very large. But the first thing to do, mother, is to see how we stand."

"There's this house. That is all we have, and Squire Turner holds a mortgage on that."

"Then we own it all except four hundred dollars. It is worth fully twelve hundred dollars, so that we are worth at least eight hundred dollars."

"That won't last very long," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Not if we spend it; but I hope we shan't have to do that. Still it gives us something to fall back upon, in case I don't succeed very well at first. Then there is the furniture; that must be worth at least two hundred dollars."

"It cost considerably more."

"Never mind, we will call it two hundred dollars. You see," he added, cheerfully, "we have got up to a thousand already. Now, mother, have you got any money in the house?"

"About twenty-five dollars."

"Well, it isn't so bad as it might be. Think of those who are left wholly destitute, with starvation staring them in the face. When you think of that, we are quite rich in comparison."

"I might have had something to help along," said Mrs. Raymond, "but my father lost what little property we had before he died, and left nothing at all."

"Wasn't he a soldier in the war of 1812?"

"Yes, he served for over a year."

"Didn't he get any pension, or anything else from the government?"

"No, he got no pension. He got a grant of land—eighty acres, I believe—somewhere out in Wisconsin."

"What did he do with the land?"

"He never did anything. Land was only a dollar and a quarter an acre, and nobody would give him that. An agent offered him twenty-five dollars for his grant, but he would not take it. Then he put away the paper, and never did anything more about it."

"Have you got the paper now, mother?" asked Harry, interested.

"Yes, I believe so. I think I have it somewhere in my bureau."

Mrs. Raymond went upstairs, and shortly returned

with a paper yellow with age, setting forth that Henry Mann, in consideration of services rendered to the government, was entitled to a quarter section of land, the location of which was specified.

"A quarter section," said Harry. "That's a hundred and sixty acres—more than you thought."

"Is it?" said Mrs. Raymond, listlessly. "I suppose it doesn't make much difference now which it is. After so long a time there is no chance of getting it, and I suppose it wouldn't be worth much."

"I will go round to-morrow, and see Squire Turner, and perhaps he can give me some information. But we haven't talked about our plans yet."

"I have thought of nothing."

"But I have. I will tell you about it, and see what you think. First, I thought of hiring some land, and turning farmer; but I don't believe I could earn much."

"No; I don't think you could earn much that way."

"Then I thought I might go to the city, and get a small stock of goods, and go round peddling. Or, perhaps, I might get the agency for some popular article, and travel about with it."

"I am afraid it would be a great undertaking. Besides, you have no money to invest."

"That's true; but I could raise some. Squire Turner might advance me one hundred dollars, and increase the mortgage to that amount. As soon as I made money enough, I would pay it back, and then we should be as well off as we are now."

"I don't know what to think," said Mrs. Raymond, sighing. "I never had any head for business."

"But you will consent to my asking such a loan?"

"Yes; if you really think it will do any good."

"I do. Remember my motto, mother, 'Sink or Swim!' I've made up my mind to swim."

Thus ended the conference. Harry saw that it was as

his mother said—she had no head for business. He must form his own plans, and carry them through without assistance.

CHAPTER V

SQUIRE TURNER

BEFORE doing anything else, Harry determined to consult some one about the land warrant.

He did not particularly like the squire, who was not popular in the neighborhood; but still he had the reputation of being well acquainted with matters of business, and, though not a regular lawyer, was accustomed to draw up deeds, and conveyances, and wills, and, in fact, supplied the place of a lawyer so far as his neighbors were concerned. So Harry, the next morning, with the document in his breastpocket, went to Squire Turner's residence.

It was half-past eight o'clock, and James Turner was standing on the front steps with his books under his arm.

"Halloo!" said he; "what do you want?"

This was not a very civil or cordial greeting, and Harry did not feel compelled to satisfy his curiosity.

"My business is with your father."

"I suppose you've come for a job," said James, coarsely. "I suppose you'll be awful poor."

"I don't know about that," said Harry, coolly.

"Maybe my father'll hire you to saw wood."

"Thank you; but that isn't the business I am thinking of following."

"Perhaps you are going to be a merchant," sneered James.

"Very likely I may be some time."

James was nettled to find that his taunts rebounded so harmlessly, and this led him to one parting shot.

Harry had ascended the front steps, and was about to ring the bell, when James said, "You needn't ring. You can go round to the back door."

"Is that where you go in?" asked Harry.

"No."

"Then, if you use the front door, I shall," and Harry rang a peal a little louder than he would have otherwise done.

The door was speedily opened by a servant.

"Is Squire Turner in?" asked Harry.

"Yes, he is. Won't you come in?"

Harry entered, and passed into a room on the right, which the squire generally used as a sitting-room. Here it was that the amateur lawyer received business calls, and transacted such business as came to his hands.

Squire Turner was a tall man, with iron-gray hair, and a slight stoop in the shoulders. His face, which was rather harsh, began to show wrinkles. It was not, on the whole, a very pleasing or encouraging aspect; but Harry Raymond, who was used to the squire's looks, did not waste much thought upon this.

"Did you want to see me?" asked the squire, adjusting his spectacles, and looking at our hero.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"I'm rather busy now. Be as quick as you can."

"My father's death," said Harry, his lip quivering a little as he said it, "makes it necessary for me to form some plans about getting along. I was reckoning up yesterday how much we had to start with, when my mother showed me a paper which may be worth something. Probably you will know. So I have brought it along to show you."

Harry handed it to the squire.

"I see it's a land warrant in favor of your grandfather," he said, after a little examination.

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't he ever take up the land?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, sir; except that Wisconsin was a good ways off, and I believe he had some property at that time, so that he did not need it. Mother says he was offered twenty-five dollars by an agent, but wouldn't accept it."

"Humph!" said the squire, reflectively.

"Do you think I can get anything for it?"

"My impression is that, after this length of time, it would be impossible to get anything for it."

"I was afraid that might be the case," said Harry. "Is there any way of finding out about it?"

"If you'll leave it with me, I will take steps to ascertain," said Squire Turner.

"Thank you, sir. If we get anything for it, we shall, of course, be willing to pay you for your trouble."

Most men would at once have assured Harry that no payment would be necessary; but Squire Turner was never known to refuse a fee.

"There was something else I wished to speak to you about," said Harry.

"Proceed."

"You hold a mortgage upon our place."

"Well?"

"What I want is to get another hundred dollars from you on the same security, making it five hundred dollars instead of four."

"What do you want with the money?"

"I have been thinking that I might get a stock of goods in the city, and go about selling them."

"I couldn't let *you* have the money."

"No, sir, I suppose not. But mother is willing, as she will tell you herself."

"I don't know but I can do it," said the squire, after a little pause. "Mind, I don't give any advice as to the

plan you have in view. You may make it pay, and you may not. Perhaps it would be better to get something to do about here."

"There isn't much chance in Vernon."

"Well, that's your affair. About the money, I will consider the matter, and if you will come round to-morrow I will let you know what I have decided."

"Thank you, sir."

"And about the land warrant, I will write out to a lawyer I know in Milwaukee, and ask his opinion. When his answer comes, I will let you know."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry; and, his business being at an end, he took his cap, and with a bow left the room.

"If we can only get a hundred dollars or so for the land warrant," he said to himself, "it will be a great help."

CHAPTER VI

HARRY OBTAINS A POSITION

ON the way back from Squire Turner's, Harry stepped into the village store, as he had one or two small articles to purchase for his mother. This store was kept by Jonas Porter, a man over fifty, in rather poor health. On this account he was obliged to depend considerably upon two assistants. One of them, John Gaylord, was twenty-five years of age, and an efficient salesman. The other, Alfred Harper, was about eighteen.

"How is your mother?" asked the storekeeper.

"Not very well," answered Harry.

"No, I suppose not. Your father's death must be a great blow to her."

"Yes, sir. It is to all of us."

"I hope she will soon be feeling better. Health is a blessing we don't appreciate till we lose it."

"Where is Alfred Harper? I have not seen him for a day or two."

"He has been taken sick, and has gone home. I wish I could get somebody to take his place for a few weeks."

Here an idea struck Harry.

"If you thought I would do," he said, "I should be glad to come into the store. I have got to work now."

"I am afraid you are too young," said Mr. Porter, doubtfully. "How old are you?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"That is young."

"Yes, sir; but I am stout and strong of my age."

"You look so. Can you drive a horse?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I have done that a good many times."

"I don't know," said the storekeeper, hesitating a little. "You couldn't do as much as Alfred; still, you could help a good deal. I have always heard good accounts of you. Mr. Gaylord, how will it do to engage Harry Raymond a few weeks while Alfred is away?"

"I think it would be a good plan, sir," said John Gaylord. "It would lighten your labors a good deal."

"Very true; and I am really not able to be in the store. Well, Harry," he proceeded, "I guess you may come."

"Then I'll come this afternoon," said Harry, promptly. "I want to go home and split up a little wood for mother, enough to last her."

"Very well. About the pay, I will give you six dollars a week."

Six dollars a week! This seemed to Harry a large sum. His father had only been paid two dollars per day, and therefore received but twice as much. He had hoped, to be sure, to earn more as a peddler; but then his expenses would be large, and, after all, he might fail.

Good news always quickens the step. Harry entered

the house briskly, and placed the parcels he had brought from the store upon the table.

"Here are the sugar and butter, mother," he said. "Now I'll go out and split you some wood, for I've got to go to work this afternoon."

"What kind of work?" asked Mrs. Raymond.

"Alfred Harper is sick, and so is Mr. Porter. So he has engaged me to take Alfred's place for the present, at a salary of six dollars a week."

"Then you won't have to leave home," said his mother, brightening up for the first time. "I was so afraid you would have to, and that would make it very lonely for Katy and me."

"No, I shall be at home, only you won't see much of me, for I've got to go to the store early, and I suppose I shall get home late."

"Did you call and see Squire Turner, Harry?" asked Katy.

"Oh, yes; I almost forgot to tell you. He has taken the paper, and is going to write to a lawyer in Milwaukee about it."

"Does he think it is worth anything?"

"He doesn't give much hope, it's so many years ago; so we won't count upon it. I asked him about letting me have a hundred dollars to start in business with, and he said he would let me know to-morrow."

Harry went out, and labored manfully at the wood-pile for a couple of hours. Then he got the basket and carried in considerable and piled it up in the kitchen, so that his mother might not have the trouble.

Meanwhile Squire Turner was writing a letter to a Mr. Robinson, a Milwaukee lawyer, whom he knew. He stated the matter fully, giving his correspondent, however, the idea that the warrant had come into his own possession. In fact, he had made up his mind, in case the paper should be worth anything, to turn it to his own benefit, by hook or

by crook. He was a grasping, avaricious man, and as long as money went into his pocket he cared very little that it was at the expense of the widow and orphan.

In the course of a fortnight he received an answer to his letter. As it is of some importance, I will transcribe it here:

MILWAUKEE, WIS., May 27, 18—.

“MR. TURNER—Dear Sir: Yours of the 21st, asking information as to the probable value of a certain land warrant in your possession, has come to hand. The tract in question is a valuable one, being situated only a few miles out of Milwaukee, and has upon it several valuable buildings. My own opinion is that if the matter is followed up, though you might not be able to get possession without a protracted lawsuit, so much value being involved, the present holders would be willing to pay a considerable sum by way of compromise. It might be worth while for you to come on, and see about the matter yourself. I will assist you to the best of my ability,

“Yours respectfully,

“FRANCIS ROBINSON.”

Squire Turner read this letter with a lively interest. So the neglected yellow paper promised to be valuable, after all. Perhaps, indeed, it might be worth thousands of dollars. In that case, Mrs. Raymond would be very well off.

The main question in Squire Turner's mind was, how could he manage so as to profit by it himself. He was meditating upon this as he walked home from the post-office, when he met Harry Raymond, driving the store wagon.

Harry paused, and hailed the squire.

“Squire Turner,” he said, “have you found out anything yet about that paper I left with you?”

“Not yet,” said the squire, falsely. “I am afraid we can't get anything for it after so many years.”

"I was afraid it was too long ago," said Harry.

"I am thinking of taking a little trip to the West before long," said Squire Turner. "I may be able to find out something about it then."

Harry started the horse toward the store, and thought so little of the land warrant that he quite forgot to mention the matter to his mother in the evening.

CHAPTER VII

A MEAN TRICK

HARRY RAYMOND had been employed in Mr. Porter's store but a few days when he had a difficulty with James Turner, which deserves to be chronicled. For various reasons James cherished a dislike of our hero, which he was not likely to get over very soon. Harry had always distanced him in his studies, and had carried off the prize for declamation. Again, James aspired to be a leader among the boys at school and in the village. He felt that this position was due to him on account of the superior wealth of his father.

Now, it may appear strange that though Squire Turner was the richest man in the village, the boys paid much more respect to Harry than to the son of the wealthy squire. Harry was put forward prominently on all occasions; as, for example, when a military company was formed, he was elected captain, while James could not even obtain the post of simple corporal. Of course the latter withdrew his name from the roll in disgust; but the company, so far from being thrown into consternation, appeared to thrive about as well as before.

James Turner, however, had one consolation in all this strange neglect. His superiority was conceded by one boy, who was in the habit of revolving round him like an humble satellite. This was Tom Barton, who has already

been referred to. Tom's father was in California at the mines. His mother was a weak woman, of an envious disposition, who was always bewailing her fate in having married a poor man instead of a certain other person who had turned out rich, and who, as she asserted, had offered her his hand in early life. As for Tom, she considered him one of the smartest boys in America, and, as might be expected, asserted that he took after her, and not after his father.

"There ain't any Barton about him," she said. "He's all Jessop."

This was not far from true. Tom certainly did inherit his mother's mean and disagreeable qualities, and there were very few points in which he resembled his father, who was really a worthy man.

It might have been supposed that Harry's misfortune in losing his father would have led to a suspension of ill feeling on the part of James and his sycophant. But I have already said that James was a mean boy, and Tom was in this respect a very fitting companion for him. Indeed, Tom, besides espousing James's quarrel, had a grievance of his own. At the time that Alfred Harper entered the village store, Mr. Porter had an application for the place from Tom, which he had seen fit to decline without assigning any reasons for so doing. When Tom heard that the coveted place had been given to Harry, he felt highly indignant, not only with Mr. Porter, but with Harry himself, and was anxious for an opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon our hero. If he should venture upon an attack, it was pretty clear to him that he would get the worst of it, and this would be very far from suiting him. He preferred to wait for some secret way of injuring him.

That opportunity came about a week after Harry had entered upon his duties in Mr. Porter's store. One afternoon he was driving at about half a mile distance from

the store. Among other articles in the wagon was a basket containing three dozen eggs, which, by the way, were to be delivered to Squire Turner's housekeeper.

Just about this part of the road there was a cliff on one side, about twenty feet in height, with a steep, almost perpendicular, descent. The field terminating thus abruptly belonged to Squire Turner. It so happened that James Turner and Tom Barton were walking leisurely along the cliff just as Harry came driving by.

"There's Harry Raymond," said Tom, spitefully. "Old Porter must have been hard up for a clerk when he took him."

"Didn't you try for the place once, Tom?"

"Why, not exactly," said Tom. "I told him I would take it if he couldn't get anybody else. It isn't much of a place."

Of course this was only a salve for Tom's wounded pride, for he had been eager to enter the store.

"I'll tell you what," added Tom, after a pause, "suppose we play a trick on Raymond."

"What sort of trick?"

"Suppose we pitch a stone into that basket of eggs. There'll be an awful smash, and he can't see who did it."

This was a proposition which just suited James. It would get Harry into trouble with his employer, and this of course would be rare sport. Then, as they could easily withdraw from sight, he would never know to whom he was indebted for the favor. All these considerations darted through James Turner's mind more quickly than I have stated them, and he responded:

"All right, Tom. You do it. You can fire straighter than I."

Tom needed no second approval. He seized a stone about as large as his two fists, and, bending over the cliff, fired it at the basket.

His aim was a true one, and the first Harry knew of

the "trick," there was a loud crash behind him, and the contents of the eggs were partially spattered over him. Glancing quickly back, he saw that the wreck was almost total. Of the three dozen eggs not one-third had escaped destruction.

Now, though Harry was good-natured, he felt that this was a little too much for good-nature. It might be a joke; but he could not see it in that light. He knew that he was likely to be blamed for the accident, and he resolved to find out how it came about.

Looking up, he caught a glimpse of Tom Barton peering over to see what mischief had been done.

"It's that mean Tom Barton," he said to himself. "He's about the only fellow mean enough to play such a trick. Perhaps he thinks I'm going to stand it."

"Whoa!" shouted Harry.

He hesitated about leaving the horse unattended; but just at that moment Will Pomeroy came along.

"Just mind the horse a minute, Will," said Harry.

"Where are you going?"

"I'll tell you when I come back."

Our hero felt that there was no time for explanation. He began to clamber up the side of the cliff. This was a hard job, for it was nearly perpendicular, but here and there were roots and bushes that helped him along. Probably his indignation helped him, for in a very short time he reached the top.

Tom Barton was elated at the success of his trick. After first looking over to see the extent of the damage, he threw himself under a tree by the side of James Turner.

The two boys were laughing together over the success of their trick, when the figure of our hero, his face red with excitement, and his hands chafed and torn, presented itself unexpectedly.

Tom sprang to his feet in dismay.

"Look here, Tom Barton," said Harry, in a quick, per-

empty way, "what did you mean by pitching a stone into my basket of eggs?"

"Don't be afraid," said James Turner, in a low voice; "I'll stand by you."

This emboldened Tom. Though he would not have liked to engage in single combat with Harry, he concluded that our hero would be in no haste to engage both. So he answered, insolently:

"None of your business!"

"It strikes me that it is my business," said Harry.

"What are you going to do about it?"

Now I am not going to justify Harry for the course he took, but it was certainly very natural.

"Stand up here, if you dare, and you'll see," he answered, with compressed lips.

"Let's give him a licking, James," said Tom. "It'll do him good."

Both boys advanced toward our hero. He saw that his task was not going to be an easy one. If he allowed the two to come to close quarters with him, he would probably get the worst of it. Here was a chance for strategy, and he resolved to improve it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF THE CLIFF

SOME of my readers are no doubt familiar with the memorable combat between the Horatii and the Curatii, told in all the Roman histories. There were three brothers on each side, and the contest between them was to decide the fortunes of the armies to which they respectively belonged. After a time two of the Horatii lay dead upon the field. The third, unhurt, found himself opposed to three adversaries, all of whom, however, were wounded.

These he managed to engage singly, and was thus enabled to overcome them in turn.

I am not sure whether Harry Raymond had heard of this historical combat; but when he found himself opposed to two enemies, it struck him at once that this was his proper course, if he wanted to come off victorious.

As Tom and James advanced upon him, he feigned to retreat.

"He's afraid," said Tom, in exultation. "Let's give him a licking."

James had no possible objection.

"Go ahead," he called out. "I'll help you."

Tom did go ahead. Being a faster runner than James, he found himself separated from him by a considerable distance in the impetuosity of his pursuit.

Harry suddenly faced his adversary.

Tom, unable to check himself, almost rushed into the arms of our hero.

"Now defend yourself," shouted Harry.

So saying, he clinched Tom, who was too astonished to defend himself properly, and with a quick movement of the leg brought him down heavily upon the ground, with Harry on top.

Lying on the ground, in such a position as to fit into the small of Tom's back, was a stone about as large as the one he had thrown into the basket of eggs. The sensation which resulted from falling upon it was by no means pleasant.

"Oh!" he whined, "I've broken my backbone. Get off from me, Harry Raymond."

"I guess you'll get over it," said Harry, who knew that the hurt could not be very serious.

"Jim Turner!" shouted the fallen hero.

James, who had witnessed his friend's discomfiture, paused at a little distance. He began to doubt whether it would be prudent to take an active part.

"Let him alone!" he called out from the place where he stood, making no motion to advance.

"Come and help me, Jim! You said you would," said Tom.

"I'll have you arrested," said James, preparing to war with his tongue.

"Take him off!" entreated Tom.

Thus adjured, James advanced with hesitating steps to the rescue. He would rather have been excused, and had there been any decent pretext for giving up the undertaking he would have done so.

"Let him alone!" he exclaimed, reinforcing his failing courage with a little bluster, "or you'll get the worst licking you ever had."

"Who'll give it to me?" asked Harry.

He had merely retained his position, pinning Tom to the ground, but not striking him; for he was too honorable to strike a prostrate foe.

"I will," said James.

So saying, he made a step or two in advance. Harry sprang up suddenly, and advanced upon his new foe.

"I'm ready for you, James Turner," he said, "now or at any other time. Come on, if you dare."

James paused in his advance. He did not like the position of affairs at all.

"Get up, Tom," he called out. "The two of us can whip him soundly."

"I can't do anything," whined Tom. "My back's most broke."

He rose slowly from the ground, and began to rub the injured portion of his frame.

Thus left to himself James saw that there was no backing out. He had provoked the contest, and must take the consequences.

"Come along, Tom," he urged. "Just help me a little, and I'll manage him."

"I can't," said Tom, dismally. "That plaguey rock's worn a hole in my back."

"I'll stand you both," said Harry, stoutly.

Just then James noticed a stone about the size of his fist lying on the ground before him. It was a mean and cowardly impulse that led him to pick it up and fire it full at our hero's head. Had it struck him, the injury would have been serious, if not fatal; but Harry quickly divined his intention, and dropped suddenly to the ground. The stone passed harmlessly over his head.

"You shall pay for that, James Turner. No one but a coward would do such a thing."

As he spoke he sprang forward, and grappled with his adversary. James, having a premonition of defeat, defended himself poorly, flinging out blows at random. In less than a minute he, too, was prostrate, with Harry on top.

"Help!" he screamed.

But Harry held him down with a tight grip. Tom had had enough fighting, and did not stir to his assistance.

"Get up, you ragamuffin!" he screamed. In fact he was mortified that his defeat should have come from Harry Raymond.

"Let me up, you beggar!" he cried, again.

"You'll have to speak to me in a different style before I let you up," said Harry, coolly, for he felt that the advantage was in his hands.

"I called you by your right name," said James, provoked beyond the limits of prudence. "You are a ragamuffin and a beggar."

"It strikes me that you are a beggar just now," said our hero.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you are begging me to let you up."

"If you don't I'll have you arrested," said James, with another violent but ineffectual struggle.

"You're welcome to do it," said Harry. "Perhaps there'll be something to say on my side as well as yours."

"If you don't come and help me, Tom Barton, I'll never speak to you again," said James.

"I would if I could," said Tom, "but my back's too sore."

The fact was, that Tom's back was not quite so much hurt as he wished to have it believed, but he had no inclination to attack Harry again. The ease with which he had been thrown, caused him to realize that Harry carried "too many guns for him."

"I'll go and call your father," he said.

James did not answer. Tom Barton, glad to get away, limped off toward the road.

"Are you going to let me up?" demanded James.

"That depends upon whether you behave yourself. Promise to fire no more stones at me."

"I won't."

"Very well. Then you may lie here a little longer."

Five minutes passed, and James renewed his demand.

"As soon as you will say that you won't fire any more stones you shall get up."

"I don't mean to," said James, sullenly.

"All right! That's all I want," said Harry; and he relaxed his hold upon his prostrate foe, and rose to his feet.

James picked himself up.

"You shall pay for this," he said.

"Who is going to pay for the eggs you broke?"

"I didn't break them."

"You approved it, at any rate."

"Yes, I did," said James.

"You probably didn't know where I was carrying them."

"Where?" James condescended to ask.

"To your house. I've lost enough time already, and must be getting back."

Harry hurried to the road, where he found the wagon safe under the charge of Will Pomeroy. Jumping in, he drove in haste to Squire Turner's residence, and taking the basket of eggs carried them round to the side door, which was opened by Miss Murray, the housekeeper.

"Here are some eggs from the store," said Harry, holding out the basket.

"Why, they're all broke," said the housekeeper.

"I know it," said Harry. "If you want to know how it happened ask James."

"Well, I never!" ejaculated the housekeeper, mechanically taking the basket. "The squire'll have to do without his omelet to-night, that's sure."

CHAPTER IX

FIRE!

JAMES did not fail to make a report to his father of the outrage which he had received at the hands of Harry Raymond. Over the trick which Tom and he had played upon our hero he passed rather lightly.

"It seems there were two of you," said the squire. "Why didn't you give him such a lesson as he would have remembered?"

"I would if Tom had stood by me."

"Couldn't you manage young Raymond alone?"

"No; he's as strong as a bull. He's had to work for a living, and that has given him muscle."

"Then you and Tom had better watch your chance, and give him a sound thrashing."

This was not quite what James wanted.

"Haven't you got a mortgage on his mother's place?" he asked, hesitating.

"Well, what of it?" said the squire.

"Can't you call for the money, and if she can't pay it turn her out of the house?"

"I don't care to do it at present," said the squire. "You must settle your quarrel in some other way."

"Are you going to pay for the broken eggs?"

"As long as you broke them, I can't very well refuse."

"It wasn't me. It was Tom."

"There's little difference."

James was rather astonished at the moderate view which his father took of the matter. But there was a secret cause for his present conduct.

It has been said that Squire Turner had offered himself in marriage to Mrs. Raymond in early life, and that she had seen fit to decline his proposal. Both she and the squire had married, but now, by the dispensation of Providence, she was a widow and he a widower. Though now thirty-six, Mrs. Raymond was still a handsome woman.

Now the squire had had some vague thoughts that he might marry again, but no one in particular had occurred to him as worthy to fill the place of the late Mrs. Turner. But when Mrs. Raymond was suddenly left a widow, and the report of the lawyer in Milwaukee rendered it likely that she might come into possession of a considerable sum of money, it set the squire to thinking.

Mrs. Raymond was still a young woman, and he had never got over the fancy he had felt for her in earlier years. Indeed, she was the only one that had ever touched the squire's flinty heart. He had not even liked the late Mrs. Turner, which was not much to be wondered at, for it is doubtful whether the warmest-hearted person could have felt much affection for so disagreeable a woman.

There was one important question. Would Mrs. Raymond smile upon his suit, or would she repulse him as

before? The squire thought with proper management he might secure her consent. She had outlived the period of romance; there was no rival in the way, and for the sake of her children she would find it advisable to accept a proposal which would at once remove all pecuniary anxiety. Of course, if she knew of the probable value of the land warrant, that would make a great difference. But Squire Turner resolved to keep her in ignorance of this, until he had time to settle his matrimonial plans.

It will now be understood why James failed to win his father's co-operation in his schemes of retaliation upon Harry. In his secret heart, however, Squire Turner disliked Harry not a little, and would have been very glad of any little disaster which might come to our hero.

That very evening something happened, which went far to increase the dislike and aversion of the squire to our hero, and in the end had considerable influence upon Harry's career.

It was between eleven and twelve o'clock that Mrs. Raymond came suddenly into Harry's room, and awakened him.

"Harry," she said, in a tone of excitement, "Katy is taken sick, and is in great pain. I want you to put on your clothes at once, and go as fast as you can to Dr. Lamson's."

Harry needed no second bidding. He could hear Katy moaning, and shared in his mother's alarm. He dressed in "double quick time," and set off by the nearest route for the house of Dr. Lamson.

By the road it was full a mile and a quarter. But there was a way of cutting off from a quarter to a third of a mile by "cutting across lots." This made the journey rather a dark and lonely one, especially as there was no moon, and there were but few stars out. Harry had a stout heart and a clear conscience, and was not easily daunted. Besides, he had his little sister to think of, and

this was enough to fill his mind to the exclusion of anything else.

In due time he reached the doctor's door, and knocked. He had to repeat his knock. Upon doing so the doctor put out his head from an upper window.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"It's I—Harry Raymond."

"Oh, it's you, Harry. Anybody sick at home?"

"Yes, my sister Katy. She is in a good deal of pain. Can you come right off?"

"I'll get ready at once. Will you stop and ride with me?"

"No, thank you, doctor. I'll run home and tell mother you're coming."

Harry naturally decided to return by the same short cut by which he had come. On the way was a lonely old building, which had recently fallen into possession of Squire Turner. It was not tenanted, and would require considerable repairs before it would be in order to receive tenants. Ten years before, it had been insured for an amount below its value at that time. The insurance had been kept up, but the value had so depreciated that it would be a profitable thing for the proprietor if it should be consumed by fire.

Squire Turner was aware of this, and determined to set fire to his own building, in order to realize the insurance money.

Harry was a few rods from the house when his attention was arrested by a sight which struck him with dismay. A man muffled in an overcoat was stooping over a basket of shavings. In a moment there was a tiny light, proceeding from a match. This was communicated to the shavings, which caught at once. The man threw the basket with its combustible contents into the house through a broken sash, and, after pausing a moment to judge whether it was likely to accomplish his purpose,

turned swiftly away. Harry's amazement may be imagined when he found that the midnight incendiary was no other than Squire Turner himself.

CHAPTER X

AFTER THE FIRE

By the time the fire-engine reached the burning house, the flames were so far advanced that there was no chance of saving it. For form's sake, a stream of water was thrown upon the flames from the well near by, but the supply was soon exhausted, and produced no effect whatever. So the engine was drawn back to the engine-house, the crowd dispersed, and in place of the old house there was a heap of half-burnt rafters and cinders.

The next day the fire was the topic of conversation throughout the village. Being in the store, Harry had an opportunity of hearing it discussed by those who "dropped in" to make purchases.

"Was the house insured?" asked old Sam Tilden, filling the bowl of his pipe with tobacco, preparatory to having a comfortable smoke.

"I reckon it was," said another. "The squire's a keeferful man. He wouldn't be likely to neglect it."

Harry, remembering what he had seen the night before, looked up with mingled feelings as he saw the rather stiff and stately form of Squire Turner enter the door.

The squire, though not a good-looking man, was always carefully dressed. He regarded it as due to his position, and as no one else in the village except the minister and doctor were scrupulous on this point, he inspired a certain respect on this very account. So now, as he entered the store, in a decorous suit of black, with a stiff standing-collar rising above a glossy satin stock, swinging in his

hand a gold-headed cane, those present looked toward him with considerable deference.

"Well, squire," said Sam Tilden, "you met with a misfortun' last night."

"Yes," said the squire, deliberately; "there was a clean sweep of the old house."

"Have you any idea who sot it on fire?"

"No," said the squire. "I came in to see if any one here could throw any light upon it."

There was one present who could have thrown some light upon it, and if Squire Turner had chanced to look behind the counter he might have noticed a peculiar expression in the eyes of Harry Raymond, who was watching him fixedly. The fact is, Harry was very much perplexed in his mind in regard to the occurrence. Why a gentleman should steal out of his house in disguise at the dead of night to set fire to his own property was a question which was invested with not a little mystery.

"It must have been sot afire," continued Sam Tilden, positively. "There wasn't nobody livin' in it."

"No; it had been empty for several months."

"You haint got no suspicions, I s'pose?"

"Why, no," said the squire, slowly. "I suppose it must have been somebody that had a grudge against me, and took this way to gratify it."

"I reckon it was insured?" said Sam, interrogatively.

"Yes," said the squire, cautiously; "it was insured."

"What was the figure?"

"I really can't be quite certain till I have looked at the policy," said the squire. "I've got all my houses insured, and I can't, without looking, tell exactly how much there is on each."

"That's the advantage of owning only one house," said Doctor Lamson, as he stepped in for a moment. "I'm not liable to make a mistake about my insurance. In what company was your house insured, Squire Turner?"

"In the Phoenix Mutual, I believe. By the way, Mr. Porter, you may send up a barrel of flour to my house. I believe we are nearly out."

"All right, squire. It shall go up in the course of the day."

"Good morning, gentlemen," said the squire, walking out of the store.

"I guess the squire won't lose a cent," said Sam Tilden, after he went out. "It's likely the insurance money will pay him handsome if the policy was took out years ago. I shouldn't wonder if he's glad the old house is gone. It was awfully out of repair."

For the first time a light came to Harry's mind. Squire Turner didn't want the house, which would require considerable outlay to make it habitable, and he did want the money for which it was insured. As the shortest way to secure this, he had himself set the house on fire. To Harry's mind this looked like a swindle, like obtaining money by false pretences. Yet here was Squire Turner, the richest man in the village, occupying the most important position in town, who was actually going to carry out this fraud. Nobody except he knew that the squire was himself the incendiary. What ought he to do about it? Should he allow the insurance company to be swindled?

"Do you think Squire Turner will collect his insurance money, Mr. Gaylord?" he asked.

"Of course he will. He'd be a fool if he didn't."

"Suppose the man that set the house on fire should be caught?"

"He'd be tried, and put in prison."

This gave Harry something new to think of. The idea of Squire Turner's being put in prison was certainly a strange and startling one. Probably it made a difference as long as he owned the house himself. Still, if he claimed the insurance money, that again made a difference.

Not knowing what to do, Harry did nothing. Two

days afterwards our hero saw the following placard posted up on the outside of the store:

“ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD!—For information that will lead to the discovery of the incendiary or incendiaries who set fire to the old Jackson farm-house, belonging to the subscriber, which was consumed on the evening of the 11th inst.
ELIHU TURNER.”

“I could claim that reward,” he said to himself; “but would Squire Turner think my information worth paying for?”

CHAPTER XI

HARRY MAKES A CALL ON BUSINESS

A FEW days later Harry heard that Squire Turner had made a formal claim upon the Phoenix Mutual Insurance Company for two thousand dollars, the amount of his policy. He resolved to call upon the squire, and acquaint him with his information upon the subject. Accordingly, one afternoon, he went up to Mr. Porter, and asked for two hours' time.

“What for?” queried the storekeeper.

“I want to call on Squire Turner.”

The storekeeper naturally supposed that the business related to the affairs of Harry's mother, and gave permission.

When Harry got started on his way to the residence of the squire, he began to feel that his errand was rather a delicate one. He, a mere boy, was about to intimate to a gentleman of high social position that he was a rascal—that was the plain English of it—and was conspiring to defraud an insurance company out of a considerable sum of money. It was rather a bold undertaking for a boy of fifteen. Perhaps Squire Turner might be so incensed as

to kick him out of the house. But Harry was not timid. On the contrary, he was physically and morally brave, as anybody who knew him would readily testify.

"I'll take the risk," he said to himself, firmly.

He marched manfully up the front steps, and rang the bell. His summons was answered by a servant.

"Is the squire in?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply, and the girl indicated the door of the "office."

Squire Turner was seated at his desk. He had a paper before him, which Harry rightly guessed was the fire insurance policy. The squire had been examining it with considerable complacency. Two thousand dollars was a large sum even to him, and certainly a very handsome consideration for the old Jackson farm-house, which with the land around it he had got, by the foreclosure of a mortgage, at a decided bargain.

For two thousand dollars, or a little more, the squire had been thinking he could build a nice modern house, which would make the farm salable at a considerably higher figure than before.

When he turned, at the opening of the door, and saw who his visitor was, he naturally concluded that Harry had come about the land warrant.

"I haven't heard anything more about your mother's Western land," he said. "When I do I will let you know."

"Thank you," said Harry; "but that is not what I have come about."

At this moment James Turner came in hastily.

"Father, I want a dollar," he said.

"What for?"

"To buy a bat and ball."

"Wait a minute or two. I am busy."

James looked at Harry, superciliously, as if to imply that his business could not be of any particular importance, and took a seat.

"You may state your business," said the squire.

"I beg your pardon," said Harry, looking toward James, "but my business is private."

"I am not aware of any business between us," said the squire, with dignity, "which is of too private a nature to discuss before my son. I will, however, stretch a point to oblige you, and request him to leave the room."

"It isn't on my account, but on yours," said our hero, bluntly, "that I wish to speak privately."

Squire Turner looked at Harry in surprise.

"That's a strange remark," he said. "However, James, you may leave the room. Here is the money."

"You have offered a reward, Squire Turner, for information about the fire the other evening," said Harry, when they were alone.

"Yes, a hundred dollars reward," said the squire. "Do you know anything about it?"

"I do," said Harry, promptly.

Squire Turner was taken by surprise. What could Harry know about the fire and its origin? He himself knew all about it; but of course that knowledge was locked up in his own breast. In offering the reward he felt sure that it would not be claimed. It would impress the fire company favorably, as showing his determination to ferret out the secret incendiary, and therefore he had forwarded a handbill containing a copy of his offer to the office of the Phoenix Mutual, together with his claim for the amount of insurance money.

Harry's prompt answer led to a suspicion in the squire's mind that our hero was trying to get the reward on false pretences.

"Perhaps," said the squire, with a sneer, "you can tell who set the house on fire."

"I can," said Harry, distinctly.

"Who did it?" asked the squire, beginning to feel nervous.

"Squire Turner," said our hero, feeling that the crisis had come, "you have asked me the question, and of course you wish me to answer it truly."

"Of course," muttered the squire.

"Then," said Harry, firmly, "*you set the house on fire yourself.*"

The words were like a thunderbolt. The squire started to his feet, his face livid with fear.

"How dare you say such a scandalous thing!" he exclaimed.

"Because you expect me to tell the truth," said Harry. "If you will listen, I will tell you how I came to know."

Hereupon he gave an account, in as few words as possible, of his midnight visit to the house of Doctor Lamson, of his passing near the house, and identifying the squire in the act of setting fire to some shavings. Squire Turner listened, evidently in a state of nervous excitement, fidgeting about in a manner which indicated his mental disturbance.

"This is the most impudent fabrication I ever heard. You mean to charge that I—a rich man, and, if I say it myself, universally respected—actually set fire to my own house at the dead of night?"

"I do," said Harry, firmly.

"I have a great mind to kick you out of my house," said the squire, violently.

"I don't think you will do it, Squire Turner," said Harry, who did not show a trace of alarm.

"Why not?"

"Because I have told the truth, and you know it," said our hero, "and if I told it outside, people might believe it."

"What would your word weigh against mine?"

"I never told a lie, as everybody in the village will testify," said Harry, proudly. "Of course it is an object for you to deny it."

The squire began to see that the overbearing policy was not exactly the one to pursue in this case. Harry was not to be frightened easily, and this he realized. Besides, there were other reasons why he did not wish to fall out with our hero. Accordingly he thought proper to change his tone.

"My young friend," he said, with a very significant change of tone and manner, you are certainly under a very strange delusion. You would only be laughed at if you should spread abroad such a ridiculous tale."

"It's true," persisted Harry.

"What possible object could I have in so doing?"

"The insurance," briefly answered Harry.

"Yes," said Squire Turner, slowly; "the house was insured, to be sure, but they don't insure to the full value."

"Everybody says that the house was insured for more than its full value."

"Quite a mistake. I would rather have the house than the money. In fact, it was quite a disappointment having the house burnt down."

"I don't know about that," said Harry, sturdily. "All I know is, that I saw you setting the house on fire with my own eyes."

Perspiration began to come out on the squire's brow. He would like to have pitched our hero out of the window, or kicked him out of the house; but neither course seemed quite expedient. So, though boiling over with inward wrath and vexation, he forced himself to be conciliatory.

"I have no doubt you think you are right," he said; "but in the evening one is easily deceived about faces. I was fast asleep at the time, and, indeed, I knew nothing of the fire till my housekeeper came and knocked at my door when it was nearly over."

"Still, as I am a friend of your family, and interested in your welfare," he continued, "I don't mind giving you the hundred dollars, not, of course, as a reward, but to

help you along. Of course it is on condition that you say nothing of this ridiculous story. Come up to-morrow and I'll give you the money."

"Squire Turner," said Harry, promptly, "I cannot accept your proposition, or money."

"Why not?"

"Because my story, whether ridiculous or not, is true. I don't care for the reward; I didn't come up here to get it."

"What did you come for?"

"I came to prevent your coming upon the insurance company for that money. If you will promise not to ask for the money, I will never say a word about how the fire came about."

"I can't promise that," said the squire; "but before claiming the insurance I will let you know. In the meantime you had better keep the story to yourself."

"I will," said Harry; and, rising, he left the room, leaving the squire in a very uncomfortable and unsatisfactory state of mind.

CHAPTER XII

HARTLEY BRANDON

WHEN the squire was left alone, he began rather ruefully to think over the unexpected turn which affairs had taken. If he had disliked Harry before, he hated him now. He felt that the sturdy determination of our young hero was likely to place him in a very unpleasant dilemma. If he should not collect the insurance money, the house would be a total loss, and this would be very provoking. If he should collect it, he had every reason to believe that Harry would keep his word; and, as he was a boy of truth, many would no doubt believe him, and the insurance company

would be sure to stir in the matter. There was another consideration. If he guiltily let the matter pass, and failed to make his claim, or recalled it—for it was already made—it would excite a great deal of surprise, and perhaps suspicion, and thus again he would be disagreeably situated.

“I wish the young rascal was out of the way,” he muttered to himself.

He wished it the more because Harry stood in the way of another plan which he had in view, namely, marrying Mrs. Raymond, in case the Western property proved as valuable as he anticipated. He had an instinctive feeling that our hero would not fancy him for a step-father, and would exert all his influence over his mother to prevent her accepting him, even if she might otherwise be willing.

“Plague take the young whelp!” muttered the squire. “I wish he was in Nova Zembla, or somewhere else, where he would never come back.”

His uncomfortable reflections were here broken in upon by the entrance of the servant.

“There’s a man at the door wants to see you, Squire Turner.”

“Well, tell him to come in.”

The invitation was duly given, and directly there entered a tall man, very seedy in his appearance, with a repulsive aspect, who looked as if the world and he had not been on good terms for some time.

Squire Turner looked at the intruder in surprise.

“How do you do, Squire Turner?” said the stranger, familiarly.

“You have the advantage of me,” said the squire, coldly.

“Yet you used to know me well,” was the reply.

“I don’t know you now. Who are you?”

“I am your cousin, Hartley Brandon.”

Squire Turner started.

“Hartley Brandon!” he repeated, in amazement. “I thought you were dead years ago.”

"And wished it, no doubt," said the other, with a laugh. "Confess now you are not very glad to see me."

"I am not very glad to see you, as you are sharp enough to guess," said the squire, with a sneer. "You are not a relative to be proud of."

"True enough," said the other. "I see you are not afraid of hurting my feelings. However, I've had so many hard rubs that my feelings have got worn off, if I ever had any."

"What is your object in coming down here?"

"Suppose I say that it is for the sake of seeing about the only relative I have in the world. There's something in that, you know."

"Not in this case. We may be cousins, but we are not friends, and never will be."

"Come, that's frank—true, too, I dare say," said Hartley Brandon, who didn't appear by any means disturbed at the coldness of the squire. "Well, as you say, it wasn't that. Blood's thicker than water, they say, but there are plenty of people I like better than you, who are my cousin."

"That is a matter of perfect indifference to me," said the squire, coldly. "I don't want to know what your object is not, but what it is."

"This shabby suit, with half a dollar, constitutes all my worldly possessions."

"Supposing it to be so, what is that to me?"

"Can't you help me a little?"

The squire's mouth tightened, as it always did when there was an attack on his purse-strings. He seldom gave away money, unless he thought it would help him in some way, and he felt even more than usually unwilling to do so at a time when, owing to Harry's obduracy, he was threatened with a serious loss.

"I can do nothing for you," he said, coldly.

"I don't mean you to give me money," said Brandon.

"I only want an advance of thirty or forty dollars, which I will faithfully repay you with interest."

Squire Turner laughed scornfully.

"What security can you offer?" he asked.

"None at all, except my word."

"That isn't satisfactory."

"I thought you'd say so; but listen, and I will tell you how the matter stands. First, I suppose you would like to know how I have been employed for the last twenty odd years."

"You may tell or not, just as you like."

"I have followed the sea—I see you are surprised; but this is the way it happened. Twenty-five years since I found myself high and dry in New York, with no resources, and nobody to look to for help. In my distress I fell in with a sailor, who treated me kindly, and proposed to me to adopt his profession. It was not particularly to my taste, and I knew it was rather late in life to begin; but I had no other resource, and I allowed myself to be persuaded. I had a hard time of it at first, as you may suppose, but after a while I became acquainted with my duties, and turned out a very fair sailor. Being possessed of a better education than belongs to the generality of seamen, I found myself able to rise. I might have become captain if I had been a little more steady, but a fondness for drink stood in the way of my advancement."

"Then I don't see what I can do for you."

"I've a chance to sail as mate next week in the ship *Sea Eagle* bound for China."

"Why don't you go, then?"

"Because there's a trifle in the way. I owe twenty-five dollars in New York, and if I don't pay it up square the party'll put a spoke in my wheel, and prevent my getting the situation."

"Do you know the captain under whom you are to sail?" asked the squire, thoughtfully.

"Yes, a little."

"What sort of man is he?"

"Oh, an average sort of man—rather a Tartar, so I hear from some who have sailed under him. He likes his ease, and leaves the vessel pretty much in the hands of his first officer."

A train of reflection had been started in the squire's mind by the communication of his kinsman. He wanted to be rid of Harry Raymond. Why could he not arrange with Hartley Brandon to smuggle him off to sea, where he would be out of the way of interfering with his plans?

Then, again, the sea was a treacherous element. Accidents were frequent. Harry might never come back again, or, if he did, it might be to find him, the squire, his mother's second husband, and the relationship would seal his lips. The plan seemed the only way out of the labyrinth in which he had become involved, and he resolved to make a trial of it.

"Well, will you help me?" asked Brandon, growing impatient of his kinsman's silence.

"I will," answered the squire, "upon conditions."

"Name them," said Brandon, brightening up.

CHAPTER XIII

A LETTER FROM NEW YORK

It is unnecessary to detail the conversation which took place between Squire Turner and Hartley Brandon, since the nature of it may be guessed from the events which followed. As might be expected, Brandon was by no means squeamish, and made no objection to what was proposed. The squire did not, of course, think it politic to reveal the reasons which he had for desiring that the boy should be out of the way.

He merely said that he had reasons for wishing Harry out of the way, and expressed his willingness, should matters turn out satisfactorily, not only to make Hartley a present advance of fifty dollars, but to pay him over a further sum of five hundred when the affair was over, besides what might be needed for preliminary expenses.

To the shiftless vagabond, who had been tossing about the ocean for a quarter of a century, five hundred dollars was a large sum, though we may consider it a trifling compensation for an act of villainy. So he readily promised the squire his co-operation.

"It is best that you should leave Vernon at once," said the squire.

"Why?" asked Brandon.

"Because it won't do for you to be seen by the boy. He would recognize you when you meet in the city, and this might lead him to suspect something wrong."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I will have my horse harnessed to the carryall, and will take you over to the Wrexham station, where you can take the cars for the city."

"Have you got anything eatable in the house? I'm almost famished. Haven't eaten anything since early this morning."

"I will look to that. Stay here, or rather I will lead the way upstairs. Some one might be in. How will some beefsteak suit you?"

"Just the thing. Only let there be plenty of it. I've got a famous appetite."

Brandon was conducted upstairs to a back room on the second floor, where the squire suggested that he might as well fill up a portion of the time till lunch by brushing his clothes, and performing ablutions which appeared to be needful. He then went downstairs to give the necessary directions to Mrs. Murray.

"Broil some beefsteak and plenty of it," said the

squire. "You may boil two or three eggs also, and send up a loaf of bread and some butter."

"Where shall I set the table?" asked Mrs. Murray.

"Never mind about a table. You can carry all up on a waiter to the back chamber when ready."

Seeing that the housekeeper looked surprised, he added, in rather an embarrassed way:

"The fact is, the man was a schoolmate of mine, who hasn't turned out very well. Out of pity, I am going to help him a little, but don't care about his being seen in my house."

This seemed plausible enough, particularly when Mrs. Murray saw Brandon, who certainly looked very much like one who had not turned out very well.

In a little more than half an hour Squire Turner was on his way to Wrexham, Brandon occupying a back seat. They reached the depot ten minutes before the train arrived, so that there was ample time to buy a ticket.

Four days passed quietly. The villagers had ceased to talk of the fire, as another exciting occurrence had succeeded. Deacon Watson had been thrown out of his carriage and broken his leg, and the details of this accident were still fresh in the mouths of all.

Harry pursued the even tenor of his way in his new position, trying to make himself as useful as possible, and succeeding to the satisfaction of his employer. Always prompt, always reliable, Mr. Porter felt that in spite of his youth he fully filled the place of Alfred Harper.

Harry was weighing some sugar for a customer one afternoon when John Gaylord, who had just got through sorting the mail, said to him: "Here's a letter for your mother, mailed at New York."

"Let me see it," said Harry.

He took the letter in his hand, and looked at the direction. It was in a dashing business-hand, quite unknown to him, and revealed nothing.

"Has your mother got friends in New York?" asked Gaylord.

"Not that I know of. I don't recognize the handwriting."

"Maybe it's a lawyer's letter, informing her of a legacy," said the senior clerk, jocosely.

"Very probably," said Harry, smiling.

It was already the hour for supper. Accordingly he hastened his steps, and entered the house out of breath.

"You're a little early," said his mother. "Supper isn't quite ready."

"I hurried, because a letter came by this afternoon's mail. It's mailed at New York."

"New York!" repeated Mrs. Raymond, in surprise. "Who can it be from?"

"I don't know. Haven't you any friends there?"

"Not that I know of. Harry, you may take up the tea and toast, while I am reading the letter."

"Read it aloud, mother," said Harry.

She complied with his request.

This is the way the letter read:

"No. — Nassau Street, Room 7.

"New York, Aug. 7, 18—.

"DEAR MADAM: Though personally a stranger to you, I knew your husband well, and have heard with the deepest regret of his sad fate. We had not met for years, but I have always cherished a warm regard for him, though on account of the absorption of my time by important business I have not been able to keep up a correspondence with him.

"If I remember rightly, you have a son who must now be a boy of sixteen or thereabouts. No doubt you are anxious to get him into some kind of employment. Now, I am desirous of taking a boy, and training him in my own business. Having no one in view, it has occurred to me

that it might be a pleasant arrangement for you, as well as for me, if I should take your son. I may add that I am a commission merchant, doing a large business. Can you send him up at once? As to wages, I will give him twelve dollars a week at first. He will not earn half that, but I shall feel that, in overpaying him, I shall be assisting the widow and son of my old friend.

“Yours very truly, LEMUEL FAIRCHILD.

“If you accept my proposal, I should like to see your son at my office some time Monday.”

Mrs. Raymond looked at Harry in perplexity, after finishing the letter.

“Lemuel Fairchild,” she repeated. “It is strange I never heard your father speak of him.”

“Perhaps he may have done so, and you do not recall the name.”

“It may be so,” said Mrs. Raymond, slowly, “but I do not think so.”

“At any rate,” said Harry, “it’s a splendid offer. Think of earning twelve dollars a week, to begin with, in New York!”

“Yes, it’s a good offer, but how can I spare you?” said his mother, sorrowfully. “It will be very lonely without you. Don’t you think you had better remain in Mr. Porter’s store?”

“That will only be for a few weeks, you know, mother. Alfred Harper will be getting well before long, and then I shall be out of a situation. I think we had better say yes.”

Harry’s ambition was fired by the prospect of a place in the city. Like many another country boy he had the most splendid visions of what city life was. Even had the pay been the same, he would have preferred New York to Vernon; but the fact that the salary offered in the city was just double was an additional inducement.

"I expect board is higher in the city," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Yes, I suppose it is; but next year I shall probably have my pay raised. Who knows but I may get into the firm some day," said Harry, glowing with enthusiasm, "and make money hand over hand? Then I can take a nice house in the city, and you and Katy can come up and live with me. Won't that be nice?"

Mrs. Raymond confessed that it would be nice. Still she did not like to let Harry go. But he gradually won her to his side, and she admitted that there was something in his arguments. So, before he went back to the store, it was virtually agreed between them that the offer was not one to be refused.

CHAPTER XIV

HARRY ARRIVES IN THE CITY

ON going back to the store, Harry showed the senior salesman the letter his mother had received.

Now John Gaylord was in the main a good-natured young man, but he was not without the failings incident to humanity. It happened that he had himself been secretly desirous of going to the city. But he had no friends to help him in New York, and he was wise enough to feel that it would not be expedient to throw up a fair place in the country for the uncertain prospect of one in the city. But, for all that, he used to think oftentimes that his business abilities deserved something better than weighing out tea and sugar in small quantities for country customers. So when he learned that Harry Raymond, an inexperienced boy, had received an offer which he would gladly have accepted himself, he naturally felt a little envious.

"What do you think of it, Mr. Gaylord?" asked Harry.

"I think you had better stay where you are."

This was rather a damper to Harry, who had expected to be congratulated.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you're a mere boy, and can't expect to earn twelve dollars a week."

"No, I don't suppose I shall at first; but then, you see, Mr. Fairchild was a friend of my father."

"But, when he finds that you don't earn your money, he'll get dissatisfied with you, and send you home."

"I don't know about that," said Harry, stoutly.

"Oh, well, suit yourself," said the young man; "only if it turns out as I tell you, you mustn't be surprised."

Harry did not suspect that John Gaylord was secretly envying him all the while, and contrasting his own poor prospects very discontentedly with Harry's. But he was not in the least discouraged. He had faith in himself, and felt sure that if he did his best, as he meant to, he should get on well enough. He gave Mr. Porter notice that he should leave him at the end of the week. The latter congratulated him on his good prospects, and expressed satisfaction with his services while in his employ.

The next day, Squire Turner entered the store, and, advancing to the counter behind which Harry was standing, said with unusual graciousness:

"Well, my young friend, how are you getting on?"

"Very well, thank you, sir," said Harry.

"I think Mr. Porter may find it for his interest to engage you permanently."

"I have accepted another situation," said our hero, with a little excusable importance.

"Indeed!" said the squire, in assumed surprise. "In Vernon?"

"No, sir, in New York."

"I am surprised to hear it. It is not easy to obtain a situation in the city. How did you hear of it?"

"A friend of my father's, a commission merchant in

Nassau Street, wrote to my mother, yesterday, offering it to me."

"What is his name? I may know him."

"Lemuel Fairchild."

"Lemuel Fairchild," repeated the squire, slowly. "I don't recognize the name. So you are going to accept it?"

"Yes, I am going up Monday morning. I am to have twelve dollars a week."

"An excellent salary. Well, I am glad to hear you are so fortunate. When I go up to the city I will call and see how you are getting along. What is the number?"

Harry gave the address, which the squire copied down in his pocketbook, and with a friendly salutation left the store. He had found out what he wanted to know, that the decoy letter had been received, and that the plan was likely to work well.

"He has swallowed the bait," he said to himself, with satisfaction. "I hope the rest of the plan will work as well. I shall not dare to draw my insurance money till he is out of the way."

The cordial manner of the squire impressed Harry rather favorably. In fact, he felt very much puzzled about him. It seemed hard to believe that he was meditating a fraud upon the insurance company. But, as might be expected, his own affairs occupied the greater portion of his thoughts, which was just what Squire Turner wished. He needed a new suit of clothes. It would be inconvenient to pay for them now, but the village tailor readily promised to give him a four weeks' credit until he should be able to pay him out of his wages in his new place.

He was up bright and early Monday, having slept little, on account of the excitement which he felt. His mother was up, of course, also, and prepared a better breakfast than usual.

"I don't know how I shall get along without you, Harry," she said, despondently.

"Oh, I'll come home soon to pass Sunday, mother," said Harry. "Besides, you shall hear from me; I'll write twice a week, regularly."

"I'm afraid you'll get run over in the streets; they are so crowded with wagons."

Harry only laughed at this.

"Don't fear," he said. "I'm old enough to take care of myself. You forget how old I am, mother."

"You're only fifteen."

"A boy of fifteen ought to be smart enough not to get run over. You see, mother, you're a woman, and don't know much about boys. I'll do well enough, and you'll feel better about my going away soon."

What Harry said was partly true. If the situation which he intended to fill had been a genuine one, his pluck and good principle would have been likely to insure his success. But he little knew what a plot had been formed against him, and what a series of adventures lay before him ere he would again see his mother and home. Could he have foreseen all this, brave as he was, he might well have quailed.

Time never waits for any one, and the hour of parting came. Harry hastily embraced his mother and little sister, and with a certain swelling of the heart which he could not quite repress, hurried out into the road to the carriage which was to convey him to the railroad station.

Mr. Falkland, his companion, was not a resident of Vernon, but had visited the place on business, and had readily undertaken to act as Harry's guardian as far as the city. But after getting into the cars, he took out a book and began to read. Harry took a seat behind, where he could look out of the window. His spirits began to rise once more, and bright dreams of the success he was going to achieve in the city swept across his mental vision.

He was undecided whether, when he got rich, which he confidently hoped to be at twenty-five, he would install his mother in a nice house in the city, or build a house for her in Vernon, say as large as Squire Turner's.

So the train whirled on at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, and in about two hours he found the houses growing more and more numerous, until the cars came to a final pause in the New York depot.

Mr. Falkland put his book into his carpet-bag.

"You have never been in the city before, I think," he said.

"No, sir."

"Then, of course, you don't know the way anywhere. I'll go with you at once to Nassau Street (that's the place, I believe), and then you'll be all right."

Harry was a little bewildered by the strangeness and novelty of the scenes to which he was introduced. So this was the great city of which he had heard so much. It was here that he was to work his way. Most boys would have felt a momentary depression and loss of confidence, but Harry had a good deal of faith and courage.

Just then his courage was reinforced by the thought of his motto, and he repeated to himself, "'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish,'" closing the quotation in a manner suited to his circumstances and determination.

After a while they reached Nassau Street.

"What is Mr. Fairchild's business?" inquired Mr. Falkland.

"He is a commission merchant."

His companion looked rather surprised at this statement, as Nassau Street is scarcely the place where a commission merchant would be likely to establish himself. However, he did not feel called upon to express any opinion on the subject to Harry. It was, no doubt, all right, and he had business of his own to occupy his thoughts.

They paused at the foot of the staircase, at the bottom

of which, on either side, was a directory of those occupying the apartments above. Opposite No. 7 was the name, Lemuel Fairchild.

Harry pointed it out to his companion.

"That is the right name, is it?" asked Mr. Falkland, "Yes, sir."

"Well, I suppose you won't have any trouble in finding it. You don't need me to go up with you, do you?"

"Oh, no, sir," said our hero, promptly.

"Good by, then."

"Good by. I thank you for your care of me."

Harry shook hands with Mr. Falkland, and ascended the stairs. The staircase was rather narrow, and not particularly clean.

When he arrived at the head of the stairs he saw four doors, the highest number, of course, going up to 4. It would be necessary to climb another flight. This he did, and found himself very soon standing before No. 7. He was not quite sure whether he ought to knock, or go directly in. On the whole, he thought it best to knock.

"Come in," said a voice from within.

CHAPTER XV

HOW THEY DO BUSINESS IN THE CITY

THE room which Harry entered was possibly twenty feet square. It was poorly lighted, having but one window, looking upon a court-yard. At one end was an elevated desk, with a large ledger lying upon it. There were two armchairs in the office, in one of which a man of forty-five sat smoking a cigar. He was rather a hard-featured man, with stiff, wiry, black hair, and rather a seedy look.

"Is Mr. Fairchild in?" asked our hero.

"I am Mr. Fairchild," was the unexpected reply. "Are you young Raymond?"

"Yes, sir," replied Harry, feeling considerably disappointed with the appearance of his employer, as well as the office in which he was to work.

The fact was, he had formed a very different idea of both from the present reality. He supposed Mr. Fairchild would be a portly man, handsomely dressed, and his place of business a large warehouse several times as large as Mr. Porter's store, which he had just left. But here was a miserable little twenty-foot room, at which, he felt very confident, John Gaylord would turn up his nose.

"Have you just reached New York, Raymond?" asked the merchant, picking his teeth with the small blade of his pocketknife.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "I came right here."

"All right. I was expecting you. So you want me to make a business man of you, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, wondering if he should dress as shabbily when he became a commission merchant.

"Well, I'll do my best for you."

Harry involuntarily looked round the empty room with a puzzled air. He wondered what Mr. Fairchild had to sell, and where he kept it. He could not help wondering, also, where his salary of twelve dollars a week was to come from.

"Yesterday I sold a cargo of sugar," resumed Mr. Fairchild—"ten thousand dollars' worth."

Harry looked and felt astonished. He began to suspect that, in spite of appearances, considerable business might be done, even in this little room.

"Do you often make such large sales?" he asked.

"Do you call that a large sale?"

"I should think it was, sir."

"Ah, yes; your being from the country explains that. I sell large quantities of merchandise on commission. I never take any consignment worth less than a thousand dollars. It wouldn't pay."

"Indeed!" said our hero, becoming more cheerful. The office was small and dull. Still, the amount of business done there redeemed its insignificance.

"Day before yesterday I sold a cargo of cotton amounting to—let me see——"

Mr. Fairchild went to the desk, and, opening it, took out a small blank book.

"Twenty-seven thousand, five hundred and thirty-three dollars, and seventy-five cents," he read from the book. "What would my commission on this sale be, at two per cent.? I want to see whether you are quick and correct at figures."

"About five hundred and fifty dollars," answered our hero, making a rapid calculation in his head. "If I had a pencil and some paper I would give you the exact figures."

"Quite right. I see you understand the principle. That's doing very fairly for one day, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, considerably impressed.

At this moment a man entered.

"Ah, Miller, how are you?" said the merchant.

"Very well, but in a great hurry. Have you sold that cargo of silks yet?"

"Not yet."

"Have you thought over my offer of this morning?"

"Seventeen thousand dollars? My price is eighteen thousand."

"Too much; but I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll split the difference and say five hundred."

This offer was finally agreed to.

"Raymond," said Mr. Fairchild, "make out a bill against Mr. Miller, Thomas Miller, of seventeen thousand five hundred dollars for the cargo of silks, at present on the ship *Argo*."

Harry stepped to the desk, and with some tribulation made out the bill, as he would have for a supply of gro-

ceries. He feared that it would not answer; but on handing it to Mr. Fairchild that gentleman made no criticism. He just glanced at it and handed it to Mr. Miller.

"Very well; I'll send round a check for the amount in the morning."

"All right."

"Good morning. I am in a hurry"; and the silk purchaser went out.

"What do you think of that specimen of doing business, Raymond?" asked Mr. Fairchild.

"It didn't take long."

"No, that's city style. And it pays, too. Just calculate the commission on that sale at two per cent."

"Three hundred and fifty dollars," said our hero, promptly.

"Well, it's a very comfortable way of doing business. Probably I may have no other sale to-day—possibly not to-morrow; but two or three large sales a week count up."

"Do you want me to go to work at once?"

"Yes, I have some copying for you to do. Open that ledger."

Harry did so.

"You may commence at page 51, and copy down the entries upon these sheets of paper. You are used to copying, aren't you?"

"No, sir, but I can do it well enough."

"Very well. You may go to work at once. I must make a business call. I will be back in an hour or two and take you to dinner."

He took his hat and went out. Harry began to copy industriously. The transactions entered appeared to date several years back, and Harry did not exactly understand what connection they had with Mr. Lemuel Fairchild's business. But then, as he reflected, he was not competent to judge of that. All he had to do was to obey instructions, and after a while he would know more. It was cer-

tainly very astonishing the way in which business was done in the city.

After an hour Mr. Fairchild entered.

"How much have you copied?" he asked.

"About two pages and a half," said Harry. "Is it done right?"

His employer glanced at the writing carelessly.

"Yes," he said, "it will do very well. You have a good business hand."

"I shall improve as I go on, I hope," said Harry.

"Oh, of course. I have no doubt I shall be able to make a business man of you. But I suppose you are getting hungry."

Harry admitted that he was a little hungry.

"Well, we will go out as soon as a friend arrives whom I have invited to accompany us."

Fifteen minutes later the friend referred to arrived. It was Hartley Brandon—the same man who had visited Squire Turner in Vernon the week before.

He glanced sharply at our hero, and said something in a low tone to Mr. Fairchild which Harry did not understand. He little dreamed that the newcomer was to be intimately connected with his fortunes. Still less did he dream that he was an agent of Squire Turner, and that all the profitable business transactions of Mr. Lemuel Fairchild were merely fictitious, and got up solely to deceive him. Harry was a smart boy, but even smart boys are likely to be taken in, in matters of which they have no previous experience. But Harry's eyes were to be opened very soon.

CHAPTER XVI

HARRY'S FIRST BUSINESS TRANSACTION

LEMUEL FAIRCHILD conducted Brandon and Harry to Lovejoy's Hotel on Broadway, and led the way to the restaurant connected with the hotel.

"I've done a good stroke of business this morning," he said. "I can afford to stand treat. I made a sale amounting to nearly eighteen thousand dollars this morning."

"You're not used to doing business on so large a scale in the country, I take it," said Brandon.

"No, sir."

"The city's the place for a smart lad like you. You'll make your way here."

"I mean to do my duty."

"That's the talk," said Fairchild. "By the time you're thirty you'll be a rich man. When I was your age I worked for three dollars a week, and had to pay my board out of it. See where I am now."

Mr. Fairchild, as I have stated, was dressed rather shabbily, and, so far as appearance went, did not seem to have got far beyond the point where he started.

If Harry had not witnessed the extensive scale on which he transacted business, he might not have been very much impressed by his remarks.

"You'll be taking your young friend as partner some of these days, Mr. Fairchild," said Brandon.

"I make no promises," answered Fairchild; "but by the time he gets grown up I shall feel the need of sharing my responsibilities with some one. If he suits me, it may be as you say."

"Why not? I suppose you are growing rich fast, Fairchild?"

"That isn't for me to say. I don't tell all about my

affairs, as some do; but I could afford to give away a hundred thousand dollars and have enough left to live handsomely."

"I congratulate you on your success, and hope our young friend here will succeed as well. We poor sailors," said Brandon, stirring his coffee, "don't get rich so fast as you merchants. We brave the elements, and you reap the profits."

"By the way, when do you sail, Captain Brandon?"

"It is not quite decided. In a day or two. Were you ever on board a ship, my lad?"

"No, sir."

"You'd like to see one, I suppose?"

"Yes," said our young hero eagerly; "I should enjoy it very much."

"Don't you think you could spare him a little while tomorrow morning, Fairchild?"

"Yes, I could spare him, I think, if he would like to go."

"All right, then. I shall be passing your office in the morning, and will take him along and show him the *Sea Eagle*."

"You are very kind, sir," said Harry.

He was rather surprised at the amount of attention he received from his employer and the captain. Indeed, he had reason to be, for I may remark for the benefit of my country readers, whose expectations might otherwise be unduly raised, that city merchants rarely offer a prospective partnership to a boy on the first day of his entering their employment. Had Harry possessed more experience, he might have been led to suspect that there was something queer about it; but he reflected that in the city things were different from what he had been accustomed to in the country.

At length the dinner was over, and the three walked back to the office in Nassau Street.

"What shall I do, Mr. Fairchild?" asked Harry.

"You may keep on with your copying," said his employer carelessly. "I have some business with Captain Brandon, and shall be away with him most of the afternoon. You can attend to the office."

"Yes, sir."

"If a gentleman should call, and inquire my price for a consignment of spices, you may say that the lowest figure is ten thousand dollars."

"Yes, sir."

"If he should be willing to pay that, you have my authority to close the bargain."

"Yes, sir."

Here Mr. Fairchild went out, and Harry was left to himself. When he reflected that he was authorized to close a bargain of so extensive a character, involving property to the amount of ten thousand dollars, he felt considerably raised in his own estimation.

He continued his copying for an hour, when the door opened and a man entered briskly.

"Is Mr. Fairchild in?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"When will he be in?"

"He may return late in the afternoon. He left word, if any one called, to ask him to come back to-morrow morning."

"That won't do for me. I must leave the city this evening. I am sorry not to find him in."

"Perhaps you will leave word about your business, and he can write to you."

"It was about some spices that I wished to purchase, if we could come to terms."

"Oh," said Harry, with animation. "He left word with me about that."

"Do you know his price—his lowest price?"

"Yes, sir; it is ten thousand dollars."

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes, sir; he told me so expressly."

"If he were here I would close the bargain."

"You can do so now. I have authority to sell," said our hero, in a tone of pardonable importance.

"Indeed! You are quite a man of business of your age. However, if you have authority for selling, you may make out a bill, and I will send round my check."

Harry did as requested, and the stranger, expressing himself satisfied, departed.

Previous to Mr. Fairchild's departure, he gave Harry permission to write home if he desired it. Writing immediately after the important business transaction above mentioned, he may be pardoned if his letter is somewhat sanguine and confident in its tone.

This is what he wrote:

"DEAR MOTHER: It is so short a time since I left home that you may suppose I will have nothing to write; but I find things very different in the city from what they were in Vernon. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have just sold a lot of spices for ten thousand dollars. Mr. Fairchild was out, and told me what price to ask. The commission which Mr. Fairchild gets on the sale I made amounts to two hundred dollars; so I think I have earned my wages so far, don't you?"

"I think I shall like Mr. Fairchild. He seems disposed to be kind to me, and has said something about taking me into partnership some time, if I suit him. I shall try hard to do so, as that would bring me a very large income, and I could do a great deal for you, dear mother, and little Katy. If you should see our place of business, you would be surprised that so large a business could be done here. It is only a small room, and not very pleasant. I felt disappointed at first, but I begin to understand better now how they manage in the city. I wish you were living

here in the city, so that I could board with you. That will come some time, I hope. I close with much love to you and Katy.

Your affectionate son,

“HARRY RAYMOND.”

This letter gave great comfort to Mrs. Raymond. She felt that, though Harry was separated from her at present, he had embarked upon a prosperous business career, and that better times were in store for both. Poor woman! it was the last letter she received from Harry for many a long, tedious day.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIRST NIGHT IN THE CITY

PROBABLY the reader has noticed, with some surprise, that Mr. Fairchild addressed his sailor confederate as *Captain Brandon*. But he had been unexpectedly elevated to the chief command of the vessel on which he was about to sail. Captain Hatch, two days previous, had got into a fracas, and been so severely injured that it was found necessary to send him to the hospital, where he was likely to be detained some time. Meantime the *Sea Eagle* was all ready to sail, and the owners, without knowing much of Hartley Brandon, offered him the captain's place, which it is needless to say he accepted with alacrity. It was a position which for years he had striven to obtain, but until now unsuccessfully.

Lemuel Fairchild was a seedy adventurer, whom he had engaged for a small consideration to play the part of a commission merchant, in order to draw Harry to the city, where there would be an opportunity to carry out his, or rather Squire Turner's, intentions, with regard to him. Of course all the large business transactions were bogus, the parties pretending to purchase cargoes being intimates of Fairchild. The office in Nassau Street had been

hired for a week only, as that would be sufficient for Brandon's purpose. The ledger, out of which our hero was employed to copy, had formerly belonged to a business house now bankrupt, and had been bought cheap of a paper firm in Ann Street.

When night came, and the office closed, Mr. Fairchild took Harry to Lovejoy's once more to take supper.

"I must get a boarding-place for you to-morrow," he said. "To-night I will secure a room for you here."

"Where do you live, Mr. Fairchild?"

"Why, the fact is, I am boarding at the hotel myself just at present. I have a fine house uptown, but it is being painted and refurnished, and, until that is finished, I board at a hotel."

"Are you married?" continued Harry.

"My wife and children are traveling in Europe," said Mr. Fairchild, telling, of course, an unblushing falsehood. "I would join them if I could get away from business. I must wait till I have a partner to leave in charge." And he looked at Harry in a significant way, which caused our young hero's heart to beat with proud anticipations.

They made a very good supper, and then sat down for a while in the public room, Fairchild smoking a couple of cigars with evident enjoyment. He offered one to Harry, which the latter declined, having fortunately never acquired a habit that to boys, at least, can never be productive of good.

About eight o'clock Harry asked permission to go to bed. His long ride in the morning, with the new experiences of his first day in the city, had produced a feeling of fatigue.

"Oh, yes, you can go to bed if you like," said Fairchild. "I'll speak to the clerk to give us a room with two beds."

Harry soon fell asleep in spite of the rattling of wheels and the never-ceasing noise in the busy street beneath.

He was too tired even to dream, but slept soundly until the next morning.

When he awoke it was broad daylight. He looked across the room, and saw Fairchild still sleeping. He jumped out of bed, and dressed hastily.

Fairchild opened his eyes sleepily, as he completed dressing.

"Up already, Raymond?" he asked, in a drowsy tone.

"Yes, sir."

"What time is it?"

"I just heard it strike seven."

"Well, go down if you like. I will be down by eight o'clock."

Harry availed himself of the permission, and descended four flights of stairs to the office.

He stood at the door of the hotel, and watched the throng of wayfarers, which, commencing two hours before, would flow without interruption through the busy street until the small hours. It was to our hero, born and bred in the quiet country, an animated and interesting spectacle, and he felt glad, in spite of a certain feeling of loneliness, that he was employed in the city.

At eight o'clock his employer came down, and they went together into the saloon, where they took a substantial breakfast, the expense being defrayed by Captain Brandon, acting for Squire Turner.

Shortly afterwards they went round to the office in Nassau Street.

Lemuel Fairchild seated himself with his heels on the mantelpiece, and perused the columns of the *New York Herald*.

"What shall I do, Mr. Fairchild?" asked Harry.

"Go on with your copying," said Fairchild.

So our hero opened the ledger and went to work. His task was not a very interesting one. Still he was earning two dollars a day, and this money would enable him to pro-

vide for his mother; so he buckled to it in earnest, determined to show his employer that he was not afraid of work. He had commenced working for the partnership of which a prospect had been given him.

About ten o'clock Brandon entered.

"Good morning, Captain Brandon," said Fairchild.

"Good morning, Fairchild. Good morning, my lad."

"Good morning, sir," answered Harry.

"Well, my lad, are you ready to make a little visit to my ship?"

"Yes, sir, if Mr. Fairchild is willing."

"Yes, he can go," assented the merchant.

Harry picked up his hat and accompanied Brandon to the street.

"It's all right," said Brandon, in a whisper, placing a small roll of bills in the hand of Fairchild. "It'll be a long time before you set eyes on your office boy again."

CHAPTER XVIII

GOING ON BOARD

HARRY crossed Broadway with his companion, and went down a side street to the North River pier, at which lay the *Sea Eagle*, of which Brandon had obtained the command. It was a vessel of good size, and was now all ready for sea.

"How soon do you sail, Captain Brandon?" asked Harry.

"In a day or two," said Brandon.

"Is your voyage a long one?"

"We are bound for China."

"I don't think I should like it."

"So you wouldn't like to be a sailor?" said Brandon, looking at the lad with a meaning which the latter did not understand.

“No, I don’t think I should.”

At length he reached the pier. Bales of merchandise lay scattered about, and there was a general appearance of confusion and disorder.

“There is my vessel,” said Captain Brandon, pointing it out. “Don’t you want to go to China with me?”

“Thank you,” said Harry, with a smile, “but I will wait till I am older.”

“And then go as a merchant, I suppose?”

“Perhaps so.”

“Well, we will go on board, at all events.”

Harry ascended to the deck, and Captain Brandon followed. The latter began to point out and name various parts of the vessel, walking about with our hero. The sailors looked with some curiosity at Harry, but of course asked no questions. The mate, however, Mr. Hawkes, after speaking with Brandon about some matter connected with the vessel, asked:

“Is that the cabin boy?”

“Certainly,” said Brandon.

“He asks if you are the cabin boy,” he said, after the mate had passed on. “It’s a good joke, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Harry, smiling.

“Now suppose we go into the cabin.”

“Thank you,” assented Harry.

On the cabin table was spread out a light repast, consisting of sandwiches and ale.

“We’ll take a little lunch,” said Brandon. “It’s hungry work walking about the streets. You can eat a little something, I guess.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Harry, accepting a sandwich.

“Let me pour you out some ale.”

“I don’t care for any, thank you.”

“Pooh, nonsense; ale won’t do you any harm”; and Brandon filled his glass.

Harry had never even tasted of ale, but he did not

know how to refuse the captain's hospitality, and raised the glass to his lips. The taste was not altogether agreeable, so he merely sipped a little and set it down.

"Don't you like it?"

"Not very much."

"Never mind, it'll do you good. How do you like my friend Fairchild?"

"He has been quite kind to me. I think I shall like him."

"Keep on, and some time you may be as rich as he," said the captain, closing the remark with a laugh, for which our hero could see no reason.

"I should like to be rich, for my mother's sake."

"For your mother's sake, of course. Let me see—what's the name of the town you come from?"

"Vernon."

"Any rich people there?"

"There's one—Squire Turner."

"Squire Turner?" repeated Brandon. "What sort of man is he?"

It will be remembered that Squire Turner had carefully kept hidden the cause of his hostility to our hero. This naturally stimulated the curiosity of Brandon, to whom it occurred that he might, by questioning the boy, draw out the truth.

"He's quite a prominent man in Vernon," answered Harry, cautiously.

"I suppose he is popular, also?"

"Not very popular."

"Then you don't like him?"

"I haven't had much to do with him."

"Confound him! why don't he speak out?" said Brandon to himself. It occurred to him, however, that further questions might excite the suspicions of the boy, and he refrained.

Meanwhile Harry, who had a healthy boy's appetite,

had commenced eating his second sandwich, but he had not again tasted of the ale.

"Come," said Captain Brandon, "suppose we drink success to the *Sea Eagle*, and a quick and prosperous voyage."

So saying, he placed the glass to his lips.

"With pleasure," responded Harry, following his example. He merely tasted the ale, however, and then set down the glass.

"That will never do, my lad," said the captain. "It is always usual, on such occasions, to drain the glass."

"I don't like ale very well."

"But you won't refuse to drink it, under such circumstances?"

Fearing that his refusal might be misconstrued, Harry gulped down the liquid, with difficulty.

"Come, that's well," said the captain, with satisfaction. "I won't ask you to drink any more. Now suppose I tell you a little of the countries I have visited. We sailors see strange things."

"I should be glad to have you," said our hero.

Brandon launched out into a long account of Brazil, and afterwards of Australia. Harry listened at first with interest, but gradually a strange sensation of drowsiness came over him. His eyes drooped heavily, and it was with a continual effort that he kept them open. The captain lowered his voice, and kept talking in a low, monotonous tone that helped the effect of the sleeping potion which, unobserved, he had mingled with the ale in Harry's glass.

"I feel sleepy," said our hero at length, after making a desperate effort to keep awake.

"I suppose it is the noise and bustle of the city, to which you are not accustomed. I'll tell you what, my lad, I've got a little business to attend to on deck. As I shan't go back to Nassau Street for an hour or two, I'll give you that time for a nap."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry. "Won't Mr. Fairchild think it strange, my being away so long?"

"I'll make it all right with him. He's very good-natured. So just lie down and have your nap out."

Harry lay down, and in two minutes his senses were locked in profound repose. Captain Brandon looked at him with satisfaction as he lay.

"It was a lucky thought of mine, the sleeping potion," he said to himself. "He's polite enough, but there's plenty of will and determination about him. I can see that by the cut of his lip. He might have made me considerable trouble. Now he's safe to sleep eighteen hours at least."

He went on deck, taking care, however, to lock the cabin door behind him. On the deck he met Mr. Hawkes, the mate.

"Well, Mr. Hawkes," he said, "what is the prospect?"

"I think we shall get off in an hour, Captain Brandon."

"Good."

"I didn't quite understand about the lad you had with you. Does he sail with us?"

"Yes."

"Ah, I see," said Hawkes, nodding intelligently.

"His friends have thought it best to send him to sea, but he is obstinate and headstrong, and might make trouble; so I agreed to manage it."

He briefly related the strategy of which he had made use. The mate laughed approvingly.

On deck all was bustle and hurry. The sailors were hurrying about in obedience to the quick commands of the officers, the creaking of cordage was heard, and in a short time the *Sea Eagle* had commenced her voyage. But Harry heard nothing. His slumber was profound. His career as an office boy was at an end, and after one brief day in the city he was drifting away unconsciously from home and friends, in the power of a reckless man, from whose despotism there was no appeal.

I am quite sure that my young readers will all sympathize with Harry. His misfortune was in no sense occasioned by his misconduct. He had left home with a firm determination to do his duty, and work his way upward to a position where he could be of service to his mother and sister; but all his plans seemed disastrously interrupted. Will he sink or swim?

CHAPTER XIX

HARRY REALIZES HIS POSITION

FOR eighteen hours that long, unnatural sleep held our hero in its benumbing grasp. But at the end of that time sleep loosened its hold upon him. He was almost instantly made aware that the vessel was in motion. On standing up he found himself staggering from one side of the cabin to the other, for a brisk wind had sprung up, causing considerable motion to the ship.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Harry, in dismay, "the vessel has started. What will Mr. Fairchild say? He will think I have run away."

He hurried to the cabin door and tried to open it, but in vain. It was securely locked.

"What can it mean?" thought our hero.

He shook the door and called out at the top of his voice: "Captain Brandon, let me out."

There was no answer.

Harry continued calling for five minutes. At last, indignant, and for the first time suspecting that something was wrong, he began to kick against the panels violently, calling out:

"Captain Brandon!"

This time the captain made his appearance.

"What are you kicking up such a row about?" he demanded, harshly.

"Has the vessel sailed?" asked Harry, anxiously.

"Yes, it has."

"But I am not to go. Can't you send me on shore?"

"Look here, youngster; how far do you think we are from New York?"

"I don't know."

"Then I'll tell you. We have sailed, so far, about a hundred and fifty miles."

"A hundred and fifty miles!"

"Yes, a little more than that possibly. Perhaps you'd like to have me send you back in a small boat?"

"How long have I been asleep?" asked Harry, finding the captain's statement almost incredible.

"You went to sleep yesterday about noon, and now it's the next morning."

"Is this true?"

"How dare you question the truth of anything I say, you impudent young rascal?"

Harry had got over his bewilderment.

"Captain Brandon," he said, calmly, "you promised to wake me up, and send me on shore. Why didn't you do it?"

"Do you think I am going to be catechised by such a young lubber as you?" demanded Captain Brandon, with an oath.

"You have served me a mean trick," said Harry, indignantly, facing the captain with his youthful form drawn up and his face flushed with anger.

"Young man, do you know where you are?"

"I am where I ought not to be. In the cabin of the *Sea Eagle*."

"And do you know who I am?"

"You are the captain."

"You are right there. I command this vessel, and all on board, and I won't tolerate any mutiny," qualifying the last word with an oath.

"You have no authority over me, Captain Brandon," said Harry, proudly. "You have entrapped me on board this vessel. I am not here of my own free will, and you have no more authority over me than you have over the president of the United States."

"You think I haven't, eh?"

"I know you have not," said our hero, firmly. "As long as I am obliged to remain on board I am a passenger, and claim to be treated as such."

"Then suppose you pay your fare."

"I can't do it, and I don't feel bound to."

"You are mighty independent," sneered the captain; "and I have no doubt it will suit you excellently to get your board and passage for nothing. But I have something to say to that."

"What will Mr. Fairchild say when I don't come back," said Harry, in a troubled voice.

Captain Brandon laughed.

"He'll think you have run away."

"And what will my mother think?" resumed Harry, sorrowfully.

"Oh, she'll think you have been led away, and got into some scrape or other," said the captain, lightly. "However, she'll see you again in eighteen months—that is, if we have a fair voyage."

"Eighteen months!" repeated our hero.

"Yes, it's a long ways to China. You'll be quite a sailor by the end of that time."

"I don't intend to be a sailor," said Harry.

"Don't say that again, you impudent young scoundrel. Do you think I will let my cabin boy address me in that style?"

"I am not your cabin boy," said Harry.

"That's your mistake. You've got to work your passage. I shan't allow any skulkers aboard this ship."

This speech, as well as most of the captain's, was gar-

nished with oaths, which I choose to omit, though at the risk of conveying an inadequate idea of his brutality and coarseness. Our hero was greatly exasperated at the mean plot which had been concocted against him, and, being of a fearless temperament, would have given full and free expression to his indignation, and a scene of violence would no doubt have resulted but for the opportune entrance of Mr. Weldon, the supercargo.

Mr. Weldon was a young man, not over twenty-five, a nephew of the owner of the vessel, and had been sent out as supercargo, with the intention of remaining in China for two or three years in a branch establishment of his uncle's house. On account of his connection with the firm by whom he was employed, Captain Brandon found it prudent to treat him with more respect than in ordinary circumstances he would have paid to the supercargo.

"Good morning, Captain Brandon," said the young man.

"Good morning, Mr. Weldon," said Brandon, smoothing his face and lowering his arm, which had been raised to strike Harry. "How do you feel this morning?"

"Not seasick as yet, but I don't know how soon it may be on. I am in no hurry for it, I can assure you. But who is this young gentleman?"

"You are joking, Mr. Weldon," said the captain. "We don't usually address cabin boys as young gentlemen on board ship."

"Is he your cabin boy?" asked Weldon, in surprise, for Harry was not, it will be remembered, dressed in sailor rig.

"No, I am not!" said Harry, boldly.

"Shut up!" said the captain sharply, with a threatening look. "He's a headstrong young rascal, whom his friends have placed in my charge, with intentions to make a sailor of him."

"That is not true. I was trapped on board this vessel," said our hero.

"I used a little stratagem, knowing that I would have trouble otherwise," said the captain.

At this moment the captain was summoned to the deck, and Harry found himself alone with the supercargo.

"Mr. Weldon," said our hero, suddenly making up his mind to secure the young man as a friend, if possible, "will you be my friend?"

Mr. Weldon took the hand so frankly offered, and said:

"I will be your friend. I believe you are a good boy."

"Don't believe what Captain Brandon has told you. It is absolutely false. I never saw or heard of him till two days since, and he does not know any of my friends. He induced me to come on board this ship on false pretences, and I think must have given me something to make me sleep, for I became sleepy at once, and have slept, as he tells me, ever since yesterday noon."

"This is a strange story. What can be his object?"

"I don't know that; but he has got me into his power, and I need a friend."

"I wish you would tell me a little more about yourself that I may understand your position fully. If the captain comes down, you can suspend your story until another time."

"The captain claims that I must work my passage as cabin boy. What shall I do?"

"Have you any great objection?"

"I would not have come on board the vessel of my own free will. I don't like to be forced into going in such a position."

"That is a natural feeling; but I am not sure whether it will not be best to yield in the present instance. A captain on board of his own vessel is a monarch, and has almost supreme power."

"Suppose the captain should ill treat me?"

"I will stand your friend," said the supercargo.

"Then," said Harry, after a moment's thought, "I will not oppose the captain's wishes. I will do my duty, but I won't submit to being imposed upon."

CHAPTER XX

HARRY GETS INTO TROUBLE

CAPTAIN BRANDON entered the cabin, carrying under his arm a cabin boy's suit.

"It's time you entered upon your duties," he said. "Put on these clothes."

He expected a renewal of Harry's remonstrances; but our hero had made up his mind what to do. It was no use crying over spilt milk. He had confidence in the judgment and friendship of the supercargo. When, therefore, the captain held out the cabin boy's suit, Harry took it quietly, asking:

"Where shall I put it on?"

"You can put it on here," said the captain. "So you've changed your mind, have you?"

"No, Captain Brandon," answered Harry, firmly. "I have been treacherously entrapped on board this vessel, but as long as I stay I may as well have something to do."

"Well, I'm glad you've turned sensible."

"I don't intend to deceive you as to my intentions, Captain Brandon," continued Harry, boldly. "I mean to leave this ship the first chance I get."

"That won't be very soon," sneered Brandon, "as I don't expect to stop anywhere until I reach China. If you want to leave me there I shan't take any great pains to catch you."

By this time Harry had changed his clothes.

"Now go and report yourself to the mate," said Captain Brandon.

Harry left the cabin and went up on deck. He saw and recognized the man to whom the captain had spoken the day before, and walked up to him.

"I believe you are the mate, sir," he said.

"Well, my lad, who are you—the new cabin boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tom Patch!" said the mate, calling one of the sailors near by.

Tom Patch came forward, hitching up his pants, as he advanced with a regular sailor's roll. He had a short, square-built figure, and a face bronzed by exposure to the suns of every clime. But his expression was honest and intelligent, not brutish and stupid, as is the case with many who have followed the sea for years without rising above the position of a common sailor.

"Show him his bunk, Patch, and break him in."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Patch, turning to Harry.

They descended into the forecabin, where Harry was assigned to a bunk near that of the sailor under whose care he had been placed.

"You're a green hand, I reckon, my lad," said Tom.

"Yes," said our hero.

"Mayhap you've been seasick. You'll get over it soon, and then you'll find it jolly."

"No, I've not been sick; but I don't like the sea."

"Then what brought you here?" said Tom.

"Captain Brandon. He served me a mean trick."

"Avast there, my lad!" said Tom, lowering his voice.

"It ain't best to talk ag'in the cap'n, leastways so he can hear."

"I'm not afraid," said our hero, firmly. "I told him so myself."

"What's that?" asked Tom, incredulously.

"I told Captain Brandon he had served me a mean trick."

"And he knocked you down with a belaying-pin?" suggested Tom.

"No, he didn't," said Harry, quietly.

"Then you got off easy. Better not say it ag'in, my lad."

"It's true."

"Never mind that. It ain't best to tell the truth at all times. You shall spin me the yarn some time when we are snugly stowed away out of earshot, my lad. Now we must go to work."

Days passed away, and, in accordance with the resolution he had formed, our hero attended strictly to duty. Being a smart boy, he very soon mastered the details of his duties, and discharged them in such a manner that no fault could be justly found with him. But Captain Brandon continued to view him with an eye of suspicion. He had not forgotten nor forgiven the bold and defiant manner in which Harry had expressed himself when he first realized that he had been entrapped on board the *Sea Eagle*. He blamed himself now that he had not inflicted a humiliating punishment upon Harry at the time, and he carefully scrutinized his conduct in order to find a pretext for paying off the old score.

But Harry thus far gave him no opportunity. He had not made any complaints against the captain to any one except Tom Patch, to whom he told the whole story, winning the stout-hearted sailor's sympathy and friendship. Thus Harry felt that he had one friend on the vessel; nay, two, for the supercargo, of whom mention has already been made, had by no means forgotten the promise he made to our hero to be his friend. He frequently approached him when at work, and conversed with him in a pleasant manner, as with an equal, never putting on an air of condescension, as some in his position would have done.

This intimacy and evident good feeling between the supercargo and our hero, Captain Brandon saw with dis-

satisfaction. The young man was studiously polite and respectful to him. But he saw that his ceremonious politeness melted away when he spoke to Harry Raymond, whom he addressed in a cordial, kindly manner which bespoke friendship. Captain Brandon brooded over this, being of a jealous, suspicious temper, and resolved, on the first occasion that presented itself, to take vengeance upon Harry, and thus at once gratify his dislike for our hero and the supercargo.

There was another member of the ship's crew whom it will be necessary to introduce.

This was Jack Rodman, a boy somewhat older than Harry, and as different from our hero as can well be imagined. He was coarse, ignorant and vicious, and could swear with as great fluency as any sailor twice his age. He made at first some approaches to intimacy with our hero, but Harry was too disgusted with what he had seen of him to care much about striking up a friendship. On this account Jack bore a grudge against our hero, and would have played some mischievous trick upon him but for Tom Patch's evident friendship for Harry. Jack was afraid of the stout sailor, and felt compelled to effect his object in an underhand manner.

Among the peculiarities of Captain Brandon's appearance was a very long nose. Brandon was aware of the prominence of this feature, and felt sensitive about it. As a boy he had been annoyed by the jocular allusions of his school-fellows to it, and nothing disturbed his temper more than any reference to it, or even a significant glance at it. Jack Rodman had observed this peculiarity in the captain, and determined to take advantage of it in order to get Harry into trouble.

One night, unobserved as he supposed, he drew with a piece of chalk a rude caricature of the captain's face, in a part of the vessel where it would be likely to be seen by Brandon. The size of the nose was exaggerated, but

there was also in the other features a general resemblance to the captain, so that it was quite evident who was meant.

Jack supposed that he was unobserved, and so he might have been, but for the accidental approach of the super-cargo.

Mr. Weldon glanced at what Jack was doing, and a smile came to his face. He was rather amused by the caricature, and, having no very particular regard for the captain, passed on in silence, not feeling called upon to interfere.

The next morning Captain Brandon, in pacing the deck, suddenly came face to face with the caricature, which had not been effaced.

Instantly the blood rushed to his face.

"Who did this?" he roared.

The vehemence of his tone attracted general attention. The sailors looked at one another, and exchanged sly glances indicative of amusement.

"Why don't you answer, some of you?" continued the angry captain. "Point out the man, and I'll flog him till he can't stand."

Captain Brandon resolved to use other means.

"I'll give five dollars to the man who'll tell me who drew this figure."

Jack Rodman came on deck just as this offer was made. His eyes sparkled with joy. He not only had it in his power to get Harry into trouble, but he would be rewarded for doing it.

"I know who did it, Captain Brandon," he said.

"Ah!" said the captain, turning toward Jack. "Tell me at once, then."

"*He* did it," said Jack, pointing out Harry.

"Did *he* do it?" growled Brandon.

"Yes, I saw him do it."

By this time Harry, who had been struck dumb by the

suddenness of the accusation, and the evident malice of Jack, recovered himself, and said boldly:

"Captain Brandon, that is a lie, and Jack Rodman knows it is. I know nothing of the figure, and had nothing to do with it."

"I saw you do it," said Jack.

"I have no doubt he did it," said the captain, furiously. "Strip him, and we'll give him a taste of the lash."

CHAPTER XXI

AN UNEXPECTED VICTORY

THE captain's order was a general one and addressed to no one in particular. The sailors stood still, therefore, till the captain exclaimed again, stamping fiercely:

"Seize him, I say, and strip him."

With a grin of enjoyment Jack Rodman started forward and prepared to obey the captain's command. He expected to be supported by others of the crew, but found himself alone. Still he was taller and stouter than Harry, and felt confident of an easy victory over him.

When our hero saw him approach he said:

"Stand off, Jack Rodman, if you know what's good for yourself!"

"What can you do?" sneered Jack.

"Give him a thrashing!" said the captain, anticipating with pleasure the utter discomfiture of Harry, who, so far as appearances went, was decidedly the weaker of the two. Jack Rodman would not have been by any means so confident of an easy victory had he been aware that our hero had been initiated in the science of boxing by a young man from New York who spent a summer in Vernon.

"A ring! a ring!" shouted the sailors. "Let 'em have it out!"

No opposition being made by the officers, the crew at once formed a ring round the two combatants. A few of the more generous sympathized with the "little one," as they called Harry; but with the majority there was no particular sentiment, except a desire to see the fight. Prominent in the ring was Tom Patch, Harry's friend. His honest, bronzed face was shadowed by anxiety, for he, like the rest, had no doubt that Harry would get whipped.

"It's a shame," he muttered. "It ain't a fair match. Jack's twenty pounds heavier than the little one."

"Let 'em fight it out! Who cares which gets whipped?" said the next sailor.

"I do," said Tom. "The little fellow's a good one, and I don't believe he made the figger."

"Silence, men!" exclaimed the captain. "Pitch into him, boy, and mind you give him a sound flogging, or you'll get one yourself."

Jack did not need to be urged on. He had an unreasoning and unreasonable hatred of our hero, whom he instinctively felt to be his superior in every way but physical strength. He accordingly advanced, confident of an easy victory, swinging his fists in an unscientific way.

Harry awaited his approach calmly, quietly putting himself in the proper attitude of defence. With his fists doubled up, prepared for action, and one foot advanced before the other, he stood, watching warily the demonstrations of his antagonist. Jack did not comprehend the meaning of this preparation, and continued to advance, with rash confidence in his own prowess. He made a fierce lunge against our hero, not taking care to protect himself against assault. The consequence was, that while Harry parried the blow with one hand, with the other he planted a smart blow in Rodman's face, which, striking his nose, drew blood.

There was a shout of applause, mingled with surprise, at this unexpected turning of the tables.

“Good for you!” “I bet on the little one!” “He’s got pluck!” was heard from the sailors.

Perhaps the most astonished person on deck was Jack Rodman himself. He took a fresh look at Harry, to make sure that he was as right in his first impression as to his inferior size and strength.

“Give it to him, Jack! Don’t let him get the best of you!” called out a backer.

“No, I won’t,” growled Jack. “I’ll chaw him up.”

Our hero listened to this threat without being discomposed. He had made a critical survey of his antagonist, and formed an estimate of his ability. He saw that Jack was his superior in strength, and if they should come to in-fighting that he would get the worst of it. But he saw also that of scientific fighting Jack knew nothing. His course was to keep him at arm’s length, and conduct the contest on scientific principles.

Jack rushed again. This time our hero planted a blow in his left eye, which caused Jack to stagger back with a howl of dismay and rage. By this time his blood was up, and he was driven on by a kind of blind fury, aggravated by the mortification he experienced at being worsted by a smaller boy in presence of the ship’s crew. His reputation was at stake. He knew that if he retired from the contest defeated he would never hear the last of it.

He made another furious dash, and tried hard to seize Harry round the middle, when he would have found it an easy task, in consequence of his superior strength, to throw him. But our hero understood very well his purpose. He eluded the grasp of his furious adversary, and planted two blows quick as lightning, one in his breast, the other in his face. While Jack was staggering under them, he gathered up his strength, and put it all into one final blow, which finished the work effectively. Jack fell on deck heavily, and so bewildered was he that he lay there motionless, and did not at first attempt to rise.

This turned the tide in favor of our hero. Sailors admire pluck, especially when it is shown by a little fellow contending against odds. There was a chorus of approving exclamations, expressed in the characteristic sailor dialect, and Harry, standing in the center of the ring, his face flushed with the excitement of the contest, was transformed in the eyes of all into a hero. The most delighted of all was Tom Patch, who swung his hat, and called out for three cheers for the victor. The result was the more gratifying to him, because wholly unexpected. The supercargo, also, standing aloof from the ring, had witnessed the contest, and his sympathies also had been with our hero, for he had already formed an opinion far from favorable of Jack Rodman, whom he had another reason for not liking.

But there was one to whom the result of the contest was in the highest degree unsatisfactory. This was Captain Brandon. He had been far from anticipating such a dénouement and a frown gathered on his face.

"Get up and try it again!" he said to Jack.

But Jack Rodman had had enough of it.

"All right!" growled Captain Brandon. "I've got an account to settle with the boy myself. He may not get off so easily out of my hands. Men, go back to your work."

At the captain's word of command the ring was broken, and the sailors returned to the duties which had been interrupted by the contest that has just been described.

"Now, you young rascal," said Captain Brandon, menacingly, "what did you mean by that — picture?" filling up the blank with an oath.

"I have already told you, Captain Brandon," said Harry, firmly, "that I had nothing to do with the drawing."

"Do you dare to contradict me?"

"I contradict no one," said Harry. "I only say that

I had nothing to do with that picture. I did not see it till this morning, a short time before you charged me with it."

"Your lie shan't save you!" exclaimed Captain Brandon. "I'll take you in hand myself, and we'll see who'll come off best."

Harry turned pale. He knew that he was no match for a grown man, and he saw that in the present state of the captain's temper he was likely to suffer severely. That he should dread the treatment he was likely to receive was only natural, but he showed no outward fear, save in the paleness of his cheeks. He stood manfully, with his lips compressed, waiting for the attack. But help came to him from an unexpected quarter.

"Stop one moment, Captain Brandon!" said the supercargo, and there was a tone of authority in the young man's voice.

The captain turned.

"Mr. Weldon," he said, "this is no affair of yours. I will thank you to attend to your own business."

"Captain Brandon, you are about to punish this boy for nothing."

"Do you call that nothing?" asked the captain, indicating the caricature.

"He had no hand in it."

"Who did it, then?"

"The boy he was fighting with, Jack Rodman."

"Are you sure of this?" demanded the captain, in amazement.

"Yes; I saw him myself engaged upon it last evening. I would not have betrayed him had he not tried to implicate an innocent party."

Captain Brandon knew not what to think.

In return for the supercargo's explanation, he did not reply a word, but, turning on his heel, descended the companion-way to the cabin, where he kept himself for the

next two or three hours. After he had left the deck, Harry went up to the supercargo, and in a frank way said:

"I cannot tell you, Mr. Weldon, how much I am obliged to you for coming to my defence."

"I told you I would stand your friend when you stood in need of one," said the young man, kindly. "I am thankful that I was able to do it so effectually."

He took Harry's hand and pressed it warmly. Our young hero felt, with a thrill of thankfulness, that he had at least one good friend on board the *Sea Eagle*; two, in fact, for Tom Patch he knew would stand by him through thick and thin.

CHAPTER XXII

IN SUSPENSE

WE must now go back to Vernon, and inquire how Mrs. Raymond is getting on, while Harry is each day drifting further and further away from home.

Harry's first and only letter from the city has already been given. It brought comfort and a degree of hopefulness to his mother. She felt that she could bear her solitude better if Harry was doing well. A few years, and they might be together again, as he anticipated; perhaps living in New York. In the meantime, he must come home once a month at least. Then his letters would, no doubt, be frequent.

Two days passed, however, and no letter. She began to get anxious, but reflected that Harry probably had a great deal to do. Still it was not like him to neglect her.

Two days more passed, and still no letter. Mrs. Raymond now became very anxious. She had about made up her mind to go up to the city herself, though she could ill

spare the money needful for the trip, when she met Squire Turner in the street, on the way home from the postoffice.

"Good morning, Mrs. Raymond," he said, graciously; "what do you hear from Harry? I am told he has gone to the city to seek his fortune."

"I am feeling very anxious about him," she said. "I received a letter from Harry four days ago, just after he reached New York, and I have heard nothing since."

"No doubt he is very busy," said the squire.

"He would not be too busy to write me a few lines. He would know that I should feel anxious," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Perhaps he has written, and the letter has miscarried. Letters often do. I have it happen frequently."

"It may be," said Mrs. Raymond, with momentary relief. "I wish I was sure of it. He is my only boy, Squire Turner. If anything should happen to him, it would break my heart."

Knowing full well the wicked plot he had contrived against this poor woman's peace and happiness, Squire Turner felt a momentary thrill of compunction at what he had done. But his innate selfishness soon conquered this feeling. He had too many reasons for wishing Harry away, to sympathize with his mother.

"Very likely you'll get a letter to-night," he said.

"If not, I shall go to the city to-morrow morning," said Mrs. Raymond. "I am afraid something has happened to Harry."

Here was a chance for Squire Turner to make what would be regarded as a friendly offer.

"Mrs. Raymond," he said, "it will be quite an undertaking for you to go to the city, not to mention the expense, which will, of course, be a consideration with you. I was thinking of going there myself one day next week, but as you are feeling anxious about Harry, I will change my plans, and go to-morrow. I will hunt up your son,

and bring you home full particulars about him. I don't think, however, you need to feel anxious."

"Oh, Squire Turner, will you, indeed?" said the poor woman, gratefully. "You are very kind, and I shall feel it as a great favor."

"Certainly; it will give me great pleasure to oblige you. If you have anything to send him, I will carry it with pleasure."

"If it wouldn't be too much trouble, I will ask you to carry a pair of stockings I have just footed for him. And will you tell him to be sure to change his stockings if he gets his feet wet?"

"I will, with pleasure, carry any message. But why not write a note and send it by me?"

"I think I will, if you will be so kind as to carry it."

Mrs. Raymond parted from the squire, feeling more favorably disposed toward him than ever before.

"James," said Squire Turner, at the supper table that evening, "I want you to go over to Mrs. Raymond's, directly after supper."

"What for?" asked James.

"I am going to New York to-morrow morning, and have agreed to carry a letter and small parcel to her son Harry."

James turned up his nose.

"Why don't she come to the house, and bring it, then?" he asked.

"I promised to send you."

"I don't want to be Mrs. Raymond's errand-boy. Harry Raymond is a low upstart, and I shouldn't think you would be willing to carry bundles for him."

"That is my business," said Squire Turner, who, but for private reasons, might have shared his son's objections.

"I've got a headache," said James. "I don't feel like going out."

His father understood very well that this was not true. "If you have a headache," he said, "the fresh air may do you good. Go as quick as you can, and when you come back I will give you a dollar."

James took his cap and started for the cottage of the Widow Raymond.

"The old man's getting mighty obliging," he muttered to himself, meaning, of course, his father, by the not very respectable term used. "I should be too proud, if I were he, to carry bundles to that pauper, Harry Raymond. Anyhow, I get a dollar by the operation, and that's something."

Arrived at the cottage, James knocked sharply at the outer door. It was opened almost immediately by Mrs. Raymond herself.

"Good evening, James," she said, courteously. "Won't you walk in?"

"Can't stop," said James. "I'm in a great hurry. Have you got that note ready you wanted to send to the city?"

"I'll get it in a moment. But you had better step in."

Mrs. Raymond went back into her sitting-room, and speedily reappeared with the note and the pair of stockings wrapped in a brown paper.

"I am sorry to trouble you with this parcel," she said. "Your father was so kind as to offer to carry it."

James did not deign a reply, but, turning his back, marched off, feeling that he would rather have carried a bundle for any one than for Harry Raymond.

Squire Turner went to the city the next day, as he proposed. He went round to the office in Nassau Street, temporarily occupied by Lemuel Fairchild, the address having been communicated to him by Mrs. Raymond, though this was hardly necessary, as Hartley Brandon had apprised him by letter of the details of the plot which they had mutually arranged. Of course he found it locked, and

the tenant gone. The great commission house of Fairchild & Co. had mysteriously disappeared. In order to have something to report, he called at the next room.

"Can you tell me," he asked, "whether Mr. Fairchild still occupies the adjoining room?"

"No," was the reply; "he only occupied it for a week, and then left. I understand that he left without paying his rent."

"Indeed!" said Squire Turner; "that surprises me. I understood that he was at the head of a large and responsible business house."

"If you had seen him, you would soon have corrected your mistake. He was a seedy adventurer. I don't believe he was worth twenty-five dollars in the world."

"Indeed!" repeated the squire; "I am concerned to hear this. The fact is, the son of one of my neighbors—a widow—came to the city to enter his employ. One letter has been received from him, but no other. His mother is feeling very anxious. How long since they vacated the room?"

"I have not seen him for four or five days."

"Did you see anything of the boy?"

"Yes; I saw a boy here last Monday, and on Tuesday morning, but not since. Fairchild was here for a few minutes in the afternoon; but he, too, has been absent from that time."

"Really this looks suspicious. What would you advise me to do?" asked Squire Turner, with an appearance of concern.

"Lay the matter before the police authorities. Most likely this Fairchild is a swindler, and they may know something about him. I know of nothing else to advise."

Squire Turner decided in reality to follow his recommendation. Nothing was better adapted to clear him personally of any suspicions of having had a hand in Harry's abduction, in the improbable contingency of such sus-

picion being aroused. Besides this, he was founding a claim to Mrs. Raymond's gratitude, which might lead her hereafter to regard his suit with favor, in case he should find it politic to seek her in marriage. He accordingly called at the police headquarters, and laid the case before the authorities, taking care, however, not to be explicit, as he had no wish to have Fairchild actually arrested.

He also called at the office of a morning paper, and, obtaining copies for the last three or four days, read, with satisfaction, the record of the *Sea Eagle's* sailing.

"Now," he thought to himself, "the field is clear, and I can carry out my plans without interruption."

CHAPTER XXIII

SEEKING FOR HARRY

SQUIRE TURNER arrived in Vernon in time for a late supper. After partaking of it, he took his hat and cane, and walked round to Mrs. Raymond's cottage. Seeing him from the window, she hastened to open the door, and gazed with a look of anxious inquiry into his face.

"Did you see Harry?" she asked quickly, forgetting in her anxiety for her son even to bid the squire good evening.

"No, Mrs. Raymond; but I will come in and tell you all about it."

His face was grave, and his voice was sympathetic. The poor woman, her heart full of a terrible anxiety, haunted by undefined fears, led the way into the plain sitting-room, and then said, in a voice of entreaty, "Tell me quick, Squire Turner, has anything happened to my boy?"

"Let us hope not, Mrs. Raymond. I assure you I know

of no harm that has come to him, but—I could not find him.”

“You forgot the number?” she inquired, eagerly.

“No, I remembered the number. Besides, it was on your letter and bundle. But I find that Mr. Fairchild has moved from his office on Nassau Street.”

“But Harry said nothing about moving. Besides, if they did move, I should think he would have written me since.”

“There is something in what you say,” the squire answered. “In fact, I confess the affair has puzzled me. It is possible, however, as I suggested the other day, that he may have written, and the letter miscarried.”

“Do you think anything has happened to Harry, Squire Turner?” asked Mrs. Raymond.

“I don’t know what could have happened.”

“But it seems suspicious, Mr. Fairchild’s moving away so quickly.”

“Yes, that does look suspicious,” admitted the squire. “In fact, I thought it best to lay the matter before the police authorities, so that if there is anything wrong they may ferret it out.”

“I shall not sleep any to-night. Squire Turner, I think I must go to the city to-morrow.”

“I would not advise you to do so, Mrs. Raymond. You could do no good there. I have placed the matter in the hands of the police authorities, and whatever there is to be found out they will ascertain and communicate to me.”

“But it seems so hard to wait in suspense.”

“That is true. I will tell you what I will do. I know your anxiety, and if nothing should be heard before next Tuesday, I will go to the city again, and make what additional inquiries I can.”

“Thank you, Squire Turner. You are truly kind. How can I ever repay you for your great kindness?”

“Don’t mention it, Mrs. Raymond. I know you have no one to look out for you now, and it is a pleasure to me to feel that I am able to be of service.”

The squire took his leave, pressing Mrs. Raymond’s hand gently to indicate his sympathy.

“I believe I played my part pretty well,” he said to himself, as he went out. “She will never suspect that I had anything to do with the abduction of her son. When the affair has blown over a little, I will go to Milwaukee, and see Robinson about the land warrant, and its probable value. If the affair can be compromised, so as to bring Mrs. Raymond ten thousand dollars, I will offer myself. That will be a pretty addition to my property. Besides, when her son gets home, and finds that I am his mother’s husband, his mouth will be shut about that confounded fire. Maybe, he will fall overboard, and never come back. If that happens, I shan’t shed many tears. He is an obstinate, impracticable boy, and I shall be rid of him.”

Meanwhile, three days passed. It was Monday evening. Again he called to see the widow, now, as it happened, doubly bereft of husband and son.

“Have you had a letter, Mrs. Raymond?” he inquired.

“No,” she answered, sorrowfully. “I hoped you might have heard something.”

The squire shook his head.

“I am sure Harry is dead,” said the poor mother, bursting into tears.

“Don’t worry too much,” said the squire. “We shall hear of Harry yet. To-morrow I will go to the city again. If it will be any satisfaction to you, I will invite you to accompany me.”

“I will go,” said the poor mother. “It will be better than staying at home. I shall feel that I am doing something to find my lost Harry.”

The next day, therefore, Squire Turner, accompanied by Mrs. Raymond, went to New York. They went round

to the office in Nassau Street, but, as may be expected, learned nothing in addition to the facts previously gathered. Next, they went to the office of the Superintendent of Police, but learned nothing definite beyond this, that Lemuel Fairchild, instead of being a responsible business man, was a seedy adventurer. He had disappeared from the city, and thus far the police had been unable to trace him. What intention he could have had in pretending to be a commission merchant, and, above all, what could have induced him to send for Harry, was a mystery which it seemed difficult to explain.

With a heavy heart Mrs. Raymond made her homeward journey. Thus far she had thought only of the personal grief she had suffered in the loss of Harry. But another consideration very soon forced itself upon her mind. In losing Harry she had lost her main support. How was she to sustain herself and little Katy? It was Squire Turner who first opened the subject to her.

"I have no doubt," he said, "that Harry will return after a while, and explain his absence in a satisfactory manner. But, meanwhile, you will, of course, suffer inconvenience from the loss of his wages. Have you thought of any plan?"

"No," she answered, wearily. "I have no pleasure in living, now that my husband and son are gone."

"You must live for the sake of little Katy, and for the sake of Harry, who will return some day."

"Yes, Katy will need me; Harry I shall never see again."

"You think so now; but I am sure he will return. I have taken the liberty to form a plan for you, supposing that you were too much occupied by your grief to form any for yourself."

"You are very kind, Squire Turner."

"I will advance you a hundred dollars, which can be added to the mortgage I hold on your place. With a part

of it you can buy a sewing-machine, and take in work. I am needing a dozen shirts made, if you will undertake them."

Mrs. Raymond felt that this was a kind and wise plan, and so expressed herself. Accordingly, the sewing-machine was bought, and it was understood that Mrs. Raymond was ready to take in sewing. She obtained considerable employment, but not enough to pay all her expenses. Every month she found herself going behindhand, and getting more and more into debt to Squire Turner.

But we must leave her now, and follow the fortunes of our young hero.

CHAPTER XXIV

SQUIRE TURNER'S LETTER

THE affair of the caricature was suffered to pass without the punishment of the guilty party. Had not Harry found some one to clear him of the charge, he would have fared badly from the captain's brutality, increased by his unfounded dislike. But in Jack Rodman the offence was passed over.

As for Harry, he did his duty faithfully, as he had determined. His position was not to his liking, and he meant to escape from it whenever an opportunity offered; but, until that time came, he thought it best to give the captain no cause of complaint. He often wondered whether Captain Brandon had invited him on board with the intention of carrying him off to sea. On this point he could not satisfy himself; for, though it certainly looked like it, he could conceive of no motive which Brandon could have for so acting.

But a short time afterwards he made a discovery which threw a new and perplexing light upon his abduction. He

was sent down into the cabin one day on an errand. While there he saw an open letter lying upon the floor. Picking it up, with the intention of placing it on the table, he happened to see his own name about the middle of the page. In his surprise he let his eye travel over the remainder of the letter. A light flashed upon him as he read, and, commencing at the beginning, he made himself acquainted with the whole letter. Then because he did not dare to stay longer, he hurriedly thrust it into his pocket and went on deck.

That we may understand how far Harry was enlightened by its perusal, the letter is subjoined:

“HARTLEY BRANDON—Your letter, detailing the steps which you have already taken, in order to carry out the plan which I mentioned to you, is received. I approve of all you have done. The most difficult part of the programme—getting the boy to the city—you have ingeniously provided for. The offer of a place in the city, with a salary of twelve dollars a week, will, undoubtedly, be very tempting to an ambitious boy like Harry Raymond. Now he is employed temporarily in the village store at six dollars a week, and that situation he must soon resign. He will, undoubtedly, swallow the bait, and when you have once got him to the city, you can easily devise means for getting him on board your vessel. By the way, I congratulate you on your unexpected accession to the post of captain. It will pay you better, and of course be more agreeable than that of mate. Besides, it will give you full power over young Raymond. If he should show signs of insubordination, which is quite possible, for he is a high-spirited boy, have no mercy upon him. Let him feel your authority. Your voyage is fortunately a long one, and by the time you return he will probably be well tamed; if not, it will be your fault.

“I do not know that I have anything more to add, ex-

cept that of course you are never to mention my name to Raymond, or lead him in any way to suspect that there is any acquaintance between us. On this point I am very particular, and should I discover that you have broken your word, I should disown all knowledge of the transaction, and withhold the reward I promised. I inclose twenty-five dollars, which you say you have promised to your confederate, Lemuel Fairchild."

This was the whole of the letter. It was not signed, from motives of prudence, no doubt, for otherwise Squire Turner would have placed himself in the power of Brandon. But Harry was not for a moment in doubt as to the name of the writer. He was familiar with the squire's handwriting, if there had not been internal evidence to show that it was written by him.

Harry deliberated whether he should impart to any one the information he had obtained. Tom Patch was an honest fellow and a good friend, but he was an illiterate sailor, and, though he could give sympathy, his advice would be of little service. Mr. Weldon, on the other hand, had not only shown himself a friend, but he was a gentleman of education and judgment. Harry felt that he would be a safe counselor. Accordingly, one day when a good opportunity offered, he related to the supercargo the discovery he had made, with enough of his home life to make the account intelligible.

"This is a strange story, Harry," he said.

"Yes, sir, it is strange," said our hero. "I could not have believed that Squire Turner would have treated me so meanly."

"Your having seen him set fire to his house makes it less strange. He could not draw the insurance money if you chose to interfere."

"I should have interfered," said Harry, promptly.

"You would have been right in doing so. It appears,

then, that he was interested to the amount of two thousand dollars in getting you out of the way."

"Yes, sir," said our hero; "but there is one thing I can't understand."

"What is it?"

"He must have known that I would come back, and that I should learn whether he had drawn the money. It would not be too late then to expose him."

"That is true," said the young man, thoughtfully.

"Perhaps," he said, after a little thought, fixing his eyes seriously upon Harry, "he does not expect you to come back at all."

"What do you mean, Mr. Weldon?"

"I mean this; he has already shown himself capable of one crime—he may be capable of another. Evidently he has some secret understanding with the captain."

"You don't think he would take my life?" said Harry, his brown cheek turning a little pale at the thought.

"I hope not. He might, however, leave you by design on some lonely island in the sea. At any rate, it will be necessary to be on your guard. I am very glad you have told me what you have found out. I will also be on the lookout, and if I find any danger menacing you I will let you know."

The suggestion of Mr. Weldon that possibly Squire Turner did not expect him to return was a startling one to our hero. Suppose it should prove true that Captain Brandon should leave him on some lonely island in the ocean, there to starve, or to drag out a solitary and wretched existence, perhaps for years? This was terrible to think of, yet he had heard and read of such cases.

But, as often happens, the danger assumed a different shape from what he anticipated. Jack Rodman cherished a malignant hatred against Harry, and longed to do him some harm. It was some time before an opportunity presented itself. But at length one came.

Harry was leaning over the side one evening, thinking over his position, when Jack Rodman's attention was drawn to him. He looked around him hurriedly. Nobody was looking. A terrible impulse seized him. He crept stealthily behind Harry, lifted him from his feet, and in an instant threw him into the sea.

"Help!" exclaimed Harry, in loud, clear tones.

Tom Patch heard, and recognized the voice. Instantly he threw a plank overboard, calling out:

"Keep up, my lad, and we'll help you."

The captain was just coming out of the cabin. Tom ran up to him, and hurriedly announced that Harry had fallen overboard.

"If he's careless enough to fall overboard, let him take care of himself," said the captain, coolly.

"Won't you put out a boat?" asked Tom, anxiously.

The only answer was an oath, and a savage command to go about his business.

All the while valuable time was being lost. Harry was by this time some distance astern. He had succeeded in reaching the plank, and was clinging to it.

"Poor lad!" said Tom Patch, brushing a tear from his eyes with his large and horny hand, and he breathed an anathema against the captain, which I cannot record. "He's bound for Davy Jones's locker, as sure as my name's Tom."

There seemed little chance for our hero. With nothing but a plank between him and immediate destruction, alone in the vast ocean, without a particle of food or drink to sustain him, the question of "sink or swim" seemed little in doubt.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CAPTAIN, AND THE SUPERCARGO

WHEN Harry was so treacherously thrown overboard by Jack Rodman, the supercargo was not on deck. He had been attacked by a violent headache, which had caused him to go below and "turn in," in the hope of obtaining a little sleep. In this he at length succeeded, and when Harry's life was placed in jeopardy he was fast asleep. He did not wake up for an hour or more. Feeling refreshed he got up and went on deck. He looked round as usual for Harry, but did not see him. His attention, however, was drawn to Tom Patch, who, good, honest fellow, every now and then raised his rough hand to his eyes to brush away a tear.

"What's the matter, Tom?" asked the supercargo.

"I wish you'd been on deck an hour ago."

"Why?"

"Mayhaps you could have saved the poor lad."

"Saved whom?" asked the supercargo, suspecting at once that some harm had befallen Harry, but not dreaming of the extent of his misfortune.

"He fell overboard, or was thrown over, I can't justly say which."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Harry Raymond."

"Good heavens! How long since?"

"An hour and a half, maybe."

"And was nothing done to save him?"

"I threw a plank when I heard him cry for help."

"And where was the captain when this happened?" asked Weldon, suspiciously.

"In his cabin. I went down to tell him, and ask to have a boat lowered to save the poor lad; but he swore

that if he was careless enough to fall overboard he must save himself."

"Where is Captain Brandon?"

"In his cabin, Mr. Weldon. He gave orders that he should not be disturbed."

"That, for his orders!" returned the supercargo, snapping his fingers contemptuously. "He *shall* be disturbed, and he shall answer to me for his atrocious inhumanity!" And Mr. Weldon hurried to the rear of the companion-way.

The captain's attention was drawn to a quick, imperative knock at the door of the cabin.

"Go away!" he growled. "I do not wish to be disturbed."

The only answer was a succession of knocks still louder and more imperative.

"I'll fix him for his insolence, whoever he is," the captain muttered, angrily, and, walking to the cabin door, opened it himself.

"What do you mean, Mr. Weldon?" he demanded.

The young man's face was white with anger, and there was a suppressed fury in his tone, as he replied, "I come here, Captain Brandon, to demand why you have sacrificed a human life, by refusing to make any effort to save the boy Harry Raymond."

"I am not responsible to you for what I do or decline to do, Mr. Weldon," said Brandon, fiercely. "It is none of your business."

"It is my business, Captain Brandon, and the business of every man on board who has a spark of humanity in his bosom."

"You are insolent, sir."

"Is this a time to choose words? You have suffered that poor boy to perish when you might have saved him, and in the eyes of Heaven you are responsible for his murder."

“Murder!”

Hartley Brandon was not a brave man. He was disposed to bully and threaten, when he thought he could do it with safety; but he began to have undefined apprehensions of the possible consequences of his neglect. He thought it best to exculpate himself.

“Walk in, Mr. Weldon, and sit down,” he said. “We will talk this matter over. You don’t understand all the circumstances.”

“I hope I do not, Captain Brandon.”

“The boy carelessly fell overboard,” commenced the captain.

“It seems strange that he should be so careless.”

“That’s the way of it. He didn’t deserve to be helped. Can I be expected to stop my ship every time a careless boy takes a notion to fall overboard?”

“When human life is in jeopardy, Captain Brandon, our duty is to save it if we can. I don’t envy the man who at such a time can stop to inquire whether the danger is the result of carelessness or not.”

“I cannot afford to lose time.”

“Have you thought how much time the poor boy has lost, whose life is probably a sacrifice to your criminal negligence? A life which, in all probability, would have been prolonged to seventy, has been cut short at fifteen. Fifty-five years lost to save one hour in the voyage of the *Sea Eagle*!” said Weldon, scornfully.

“I am not responsible to you, Mr. Weldon,” said Brandon, with irritation. “I acted as I thought for the best. I am the captain of this ship, not you.”

“I am aware of that, Captain Brandon. But you could not expect me to stand by and see a human life sacrificed without uttering my earnest protest. Any life would be worth saving—the life of this bright, manly boy more than most. His death lies at your door.”

“You have said as much before,” said the captain, sulk-

ily. "If you have no more to say, I will trouble you to leave me to myself."

"I have something more to say," said the supercargo, regarding the captain fixedly. "I am aware of the manner in which this boy was entrapped on board your vessel. What motive you had in carrying him away from home and friends I do not know. You perhaps know, also," the young man continued, "whether in leaving him to his sad fate you are not influenced by a similar motive."

"What do you mean, Mr. Weldon?"

"I mean this: that in this whole affair there is something which I do not understand—something that has excited my suspicions. I shall feel it my duty to report it to the authorities at the first opportunity."

Brandon turned pale. He began to see that he had made a mistake, and exposed himself to grave suspicions. The threat of a legal investigation alarmed him, and he prepared to make an argument by which he might dispel, if possible, the impression which had been created in the mind of the supercargo. But Mr. Weldon arose, and left the cabin hastily. Now the vehemence of his indignation gave place to a feeling of the deepest and most poignant sorrow for the loss of the boy who had unconsciously become very dear to him. He thought of his frank, manly bearing, of his pleasant face, of his courtesy and politeness, and the warm and generous heart of which he had shown himself to be possessed, and then of the terrible fate which had so unexpectedly overtaken him, and the tears rose unbidden to his eyes. By this time, doubtless, Harry was beyond human succor, and all that he could do was to drop a tear to his memory. He went up to Tom Patch, toward whom the sailor's evident grief for our hero's fate had warmed his heart, and wrung his hand heartily.

"He was a noble boy, and his life has been shamefully sacrificed, Tom," he said; "but if I live, the man who has done this deed shall be punished."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Tom, whose voice was gruff with emotion; "I hope you'll stick to that. He was a brave lad, and the captain deserves to be pitched after him."

Mr. Weldon paced the deck till far into the night. Captain Brandon shut himself up in his cabin, and did not show himself till morning. He had made various advances toward the supercargo, whom he evidently desired to conciliate, from prudential intentions; but the young man met him with a freezing formality, which showed him that all hopes in that direction were futile.

So the *Sea Eagle* sped on its way, till at length it arrived at its destined port.

CHAPTER XXVI

ADrift

THE attack made upon our hero was so sudden and so rapidly executed, that there was no opportunity for resistance. Before he well knew what had happened to him he found himself struggling in the ocean. Instinct led him to strike out. In response to his cry the plank was thrown overboard, as we know. He saw it and swam toward it.

He got upon the plank and supported himself by it. Then, for the first time, he was able to look toward the *Sea Eagle*. It was speeding away from him, not rapidly, for there was a light wind, but surely.

"Surely they will lower a boat for me," thought our hero, anxiously.

But when five minutes had elapsed, and, straining his eyes in the uncertain light, he could see no preparations for a rescue, the thought flashed upon him in all its horror that he was to be left to his fate. And what a fate! Thousands of miles from home, adrift on the vast ocean, with only a plank between him and destruction.

Was this to be the end of all his glowing hopes and bright anticipations of future prosperity? Was he never to see his mother and his little sister Katy again? He felt at this terrible moment how he loved them both, and, anxious as he was for himself, with death staring him in the face, he could not help thinking how his death would affect these dear ones, and anxiously considered how they would be able to get along without him. When the property was gone, how would his mother get along?

“Oh, if I could but live for mother and Katy!” thought the poor boy. “I would work for them without a murmur. But it is horrible to die in the wild ocean so far away from home.”

He was not troubled by drowsiness, for in the tumult of his feelings he could not have composed himself to sleep under any circumstances. His mind was preternaturally active. Now he thought of his mother, now of his school-mates, and his happy school-days at the Vernon High School, of the many good times he had enjoyed hunting for nuts, or picking berries, or playing ball with the boys. Then he thought of Squire Turner, and wondered how he would feel when he heard of his death.

So the night wore slowly away. When the first gray streaks of dawn broke upon the ocean, the *Sea Eagle* was more than fifty miles away.

But it is said that drowning men will cling to a straw, and Harry was in immediate danger of drowning. His thoughts were fixed in all their intensity upon the remote contingency of a vessel's passing. He almost forgot that he was hungry. But, as the morning advanced, the craving for food made itself unpleasantly felt. There was a gnawing at his stomach (for he had eaten but lightly the evening before), which there was no chance of appeasing.

After a while, thirst as well as hunger began to torment him. The salt meat, which affords the staple of a sailor's diet, induces thirst more rapidly than ordinary

food. So by noon his throat was parched with thirst. He felt the tantalizing character of his situation: "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

Then, besides, partly owing to his sleeplessness, his head began to throb with pain, and, altogether, the poor boy's situation was becoming desperate. It seemed as if his career was likely to terminate very speedily.

While our hero is in this precarious condition, we must, for a brief time, change the scene.

Sailing steadily toward him, though he knew it not, was the Australian packet-ship *Rubicon*, bound from Liverpool to Melbourne.

Among the passengers were David Lindsay, a gentleman of middle age, and his daughter, Maud, a bright, handsome girl of thirteen. Mr. Lindsay was a London merchant, who, partly for the benefit of his health, which had been affected by too great devotion to business, partly because he had business interests in Australia, had decided to go on to Melbourne on a visit. He had not at first proposed to take his daughter, considering her too young; but she was an only child, and, as her mother was dead, had been treated by her father more as a companion than is usual with girls of her age. So, when her father mentioned his plan, Maud at once said confidently, "*Of course* you are going to take me with you!"

"You seem to be pretty confident, considering that such an idea never entered my head," said the father.

"But you know, papa, I can't stay away from you so long. I'm sure you're going to take me with you." And she put her arms coaxingly around his neck.

"But what is to become of your education in the meantime, Maud?"

"Why, you see, papa, I am not so terribly old, I've got plenty of time before me, so that I can spare a year well enough. Besides, I shall be learning something from observation. My governess says that there are two great

sources of instruction: one of these is the study of books; and the other, and perhaps the more valuable of the two, is the right use of the faculty of observation."

In saying this she imitated the prim, methodical tone of her governess, an elderly spinster, at whose little peculiarities Mr. Lindsay had often been secretly amused.

"You ought to be a lawyer, Maud," he said, "you are so good at special pleading."

"That means that I am going, I suppose, papa?" said Maud, promptly.

"Not so fast. I have got to think it over. I must ask Miss Pendleton what she thinks of it."

Maud, however, felt tolerably assured that she had gained her point, as indeed she had. Mr. Lindsay had been dreading his Australian trip mainly because it would separate him from his daughter. Now he began to look forward to it with interest and pleasure.

He consulted Miss Pendleton, offering her a year's vacation on half salary, and found her very ready to accept it.

So it happened that when the packet *Rubicon* sailed, in the list of passengers were Mr. David Lindsay and daughter.

Maud and her father were standing by the side of the vessel, looking out at the broad waste of waters, without any definite object in view. Suddenly Maud exclaimed, "Papa, look there, and tell me what you see!"

She pointed to the east. He shook his head. "Your eyes are better than mine, Maud," he said. "I can see nothing."

"Papa," she said, energetically, "I am sure I can see a boy in the water supported by a plank."

The captain was on deck with his spy-glass. Mr. Lindsay went up to him and told him what Maud had said. He turned his glass in the direction indicated.

"The young lady is right," he said. "It is a boy adrift upon a plank."

CHAPTER XXVII

NEW FRIENDS

"A BOY adrift!" repeated Mr. Lindsay. "How could he get into such a situation?"

"There may have been a wreck," said the captain; "though I can see no other indications of it," as through his glass he scanned the sea in the neighborhood of Harry.

"You'll go after him, won't you, Captain Scott?" asked Maud, anxiously.

"Certainly, my dear young lady; I will save him if I can."

Meanwhile Harry, scanning the sea anxiously, had caught sight of the *Rubicon*. A wild thrill of hope stirred his heart. Here, at last, was a chance for life. But would they see him? That was the momentous question. Had he anything by which he might attract attention?

He felt in his pocket, and drew out his handkerchief. Had it been dry, he could have waved it aloft. But it was dripping wet, and there was no wave to it.

Fifteen minutes passed in the most anxious suspense. Already he could discern the figures of the passengers. Was it a delusion? No, a little girl was waving her handkerchief to him. He was seen—he would be rescued! He became so weak, in the tumult of his sudden joy, that he released his hold of the plank which had been his safeguard, and, as it proved, his deliverance. But he recovered from his weakness, and with renewed energy clung to the plank.

Nearer and nearer came the *Rubicon*. He saw preparations for lowering a boat. The boat was in the water, and four sturdy sailors impelled it toward him with vigorous strokes. Five minutes later he was helped into the

boat, and a little later still he clambered on board the *Rubicon*—a silent prayer of thanksgiving in his heart to the Almighty Father for his providential rescue.

“Well, my lad,” said Captain Scott, advancing toward him, “you’ve had a pretty narrow escape. We don’t generally stop here to take in passengers.”

“Captain,” said Harry, earnestly, “I thank you for saving my life. I couldn’t have held out much longer.”

“No, I should think not. How came you in such a pickle? But I won’t ask you to tell the story now. You’re wet, and I suppose hungry.”

Luckily there was a boy on board, of about Harry’s size. Our hero was supplied with a suit of his clothes, which he found considerably more comfortable than the one he had on, which, having been subjected to the action of the sea-water for twenty hours, was about as thoroughly drenched as it was possible for clothes to be. After being provided with dry clothing, Harry’s other wants were attended to. A bowl of hot coffee and a plentiful supply of hearty food made him feel very much more at his ease.

He was now called upon for his story. This he told frankly and without reservation to the captain and the passengers who had gathered about him. His manner was so modest, manly and self-possessed, that no one for a moment questioned the truth of what he said, and all were prepossessed at once in his favor.

“Well, youngster,” said Captain Scott, “it appears that you’ve had rather a rough experience. I’ll try to treat you a little better than did Captain Brandon. We sea-captains are not all black sheep. There are some of us, I hope, that have common humanity.”

Among those who listened with the greatest interest to Harry’s story was Maud Lindsay. When it was over she called her father aside.

“Papa,” she said, “I have a favor to ask.”

"Well, puss?"

"I want you to be kind to this boy, Harry Raymond."

"How do you want me to be kind to him?"

"I want you to pay his passage to Melbourne, and help him after he gets there."

"Whew, Maud! You seem to have taken a sudden interest in the young man. I suppose you will be wanting to marry him when we get to Melbourne."

"Nonsense, papa!" said Maud, blushing.

"Tell me, then, why I should spend so much money on a stranger."

"You know you've got plenty of money, papa, and he has been very unfortunate. He's such a nice-looking boy, too."

"I suppose if he were only unfortunate, and not nice-looking—if he had red hair, and a face marked with the small-pox—you would not be so anxious to have me help him along?"

"No, I don't suppose I should feel quite so much interest in him," Maud admitted. "Do you like homely persons as well as handsome ones, papa?"

"Why, that is rather a delicate question to ask. All I can say is, that I love you just as much as if you were good-looking."

"That's as much as to say I am not," returned Maud.

"I didn't say so."

"But you meant so. However, everybody says I look like you; so, if I am homely, you are also."

"You've got me there, Maud," said Mr. Lindsay, laughing. "After this I shall never dare to question your good looks."

"You'll do as I want you to, then, papa?" said Maud, laying her hand with a coaxing gesture on her father's arm.

"I suppose I shall have to," said her father, smiling.

Though he had made a playful opposition to the request

of his daughter, Mr. Lindsay was from the first favorably disposed toward granting it. He, too, had been pleased with the frank, manly bearing of Harry Raymond, and had been interested in the history of his life. He felt impelled to help him, as he could well afford to do, and to make up to him for the frowning of fortune by securing to him a more prosperous future.

Accordingly he sought Captain Scott immediately after his interview with Maud.

"I want to speak to you about this boy you have picked up, Captain Scott," he commenced.

"I was just thinking about him myself. If I had anything for him to do, I would let him work his passage. As it is, I suppose I shall have to give it to him. But that won't set him right entirely. He'll land at Melbourne without a penny, with no means of reaching home."

"I'll relieve you from all anxiety on that point, Captain. I've taken a fancy to the boy. You may charge me the amount of his passage-money, and I'll take care of him when we get to Melbourne."

"Thank you, Mr. Lindsay; but if you'll do the last, I'll give him a free passage. I like the youngster myself, and am willing to do that much for him."

"Then suppose we call him and let him know what we propose to do? No doubt he is feeling somewhat anxious about his future."

Harry, being summoned, presented himself.

"Well, youngster," said the captain, as our hero made his appearance, "I suppose you are ready to settle for your passage."

Harry smiled.

"I should like to," he said, "but I haven't got a cent."

"Then I don't see but I shall have to throw you overboard again, eh, Mr. Lindsay?"

"Can't I work my passage?" suggested our hero.

"No, we are full-handed. However, as you can't pay,

I've about made up my mind to give you your passage free."

"You are very kind, Captain Scott," said Harry.

"Quite welcome, my lad. Here's a gentleman who will do more for you than I can."

"I suppose you have felt some anxiety about how you will get along when you arrive at Melbourne?" said Mr. Lindsay.

Harry admitted his anxiety.

"You may lay aside all apprehensions, then. I will take care that you suffer for nothing, and will see what I can do to put you in a way of earning your living."

"You are kinder to me than I deserve," said our hero, surprised and grateful.

"I do this at my daughter's request," said Mr. Lindsay. "She was the first to see you from the deck, and now she has asked me to interest myself in your favor."

Harry heard this with pleasure. He had noticed Maud Lindsay, and had been quite charmed by her bright, attractive face, and it was pleasant to him to learn that she felt an interest in him. He expressed his gratitude to her.

"Come with me," said Mr. Lindsay, "and you shall thank her in person."

Harry accompanied his new friend with a degree of bashfulness, for he was not much accustomed to young ladies' society. But he soon found himself at ease with Maud. She had numberless questions to ask, which he took pleasure in answering. Then he, too, asked questions about London, where she had hitherto lived. So they got on excellently together, and for the remainder of the voyage were almost inseparable. The weeks sped on, and at length one pleasant morning the *Rubicon* ascended the Yarra Yarra River.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF MELBOURNE

It will readily be believed that our hero surveyed with eager interest the city which lay before him. Melbourne was not so large and populous as at present, but it presented an unusually lively and animated appearance. It was in the height of the gold excitement, and multitudes had flocked thither from all parts of the world, so that representatives of every nationality might be found in the streets of Australia's capital.

Mr. Lindsay, Maud and Harry stood on the deck of the vessel, waiting for the ship to be secured, that they might go on shore. Mr. Lindsay's mind was quite at ease, for he had money, and money would provide him with all the comforts and luxuries which he could desire. But with Harry it was different. He realized the helplessness of the situation, and, despite his pluck, it made him feel a little uneasy. He knew that Mr. Lindsay had an interest in him, but he did not like to presume upon that interest.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Lindsay, "are you ready to go on shore?"

Harry hesitated.

"I should like to go," he said.

"I have just ordered my trunks brought on deck," said the merchant. "In half an hour I think we may be on shore."

"Then I will bid you good-by, sir," said Harry.

"Good-by! What for?"

"Yes, Harry, what for?" echoed Maud.

"Because we are going to part."

"No, we are not. You are going with us."

"But," said Harry, hesitating, "I could not afford to stop where you do."

"Don't trouble yourself about that," said Mr. Lindsay, kindly. "I feel an interest in you, and so does Maud."

"Of course I do," said Maud, so decidedly that Harry blushed, not being accustomed to hear himself spoken of in such complimentary terms by a young lady.

"Therefore," proceeded Mr. Lindsay, "I mean to take you on shore with me, and I will afterwards give you time to form your plans, in which I shall give you such assistance as I can."

"You are very kind, sir," said Harry, gratefully.

They had not long to wait on ship. They were soon on the pier, where a number of carriages were waiting to convey passengers to the various hotels. Mr. Lindsay had previously inquired which was the best hotel in the city, and gave directions to the driver to convey him thither. As I do not wish to discriminate in favor of any particular hotel, I shall call it by an assumed name, "The Tasmania Hotel."

It had a handsome appearance, being located on Collins Street, which is the principal business street in Melbourne. This street is about one-third wider than Broadway, and had, even in the days of which I am writing, many handsome shops and imposing buildings.

"I didn't know Melbourne was such a nice place," said Maud, looking about with satisfaction. "Why, they've got as nice shops here as they have in London."

"Yes, Melbourne is quite an enterprising city," said Mr. Lindsay.

"I'll tell you what I am going to do this afternoon, papa."

"Well, what is it?"

"I'm going out shopping."

"But I should not be willing to have you go alone, Maud," said her father.

"I don't mean to go alone. Harry'll go with me, and

protect me, only I don't think I shall need any protection; but it'll be pleasant to have him go."

"If he is willing to go, I have no objection."

"You'll come with me, Harry, won't you?" asked Maud.

"I shall be very happy to accompany you, Miss——"

Here Maud held up her finger warningly.

"I mean Maud," said our hero.

"Then that's settled. We'll have lots of fun."

They were assigned pleasant rooms in the hotel; in fact, the best in the house. Mr. Lindsay, though not an extravagant man, was always liberal in all his arrangements when traveling; and now especially, when he had his daughter with him, he was resolved to spare no expense to secure such comforts as could be procured. Harry also was provided with a pleasant apartment on the same floor. Mr. Lindsay might easily have secured for him a cheaper one on an upper floor; but he was apparently resolved to treat Harry as if he were a member of his own family.

They ordered an early dinner, being tired of ship fare, and anxious for the fresher vegetables and meat which could be obtained on shore. According to the English system, they took their meal privately in Mr. Lindsay's apartment. It proved to be well cooked, and of good quality, and each of the three did full justice to it.

When the meal was over, Mr. Lindsay said:

"I must go out now and make a business call, leaving you young people to your own devices."

"We'll go out shopping and sight-seeing, papa, as I told you."

"Don't go too far, or you might get lost."

"Never fear that. But there's one thing you mustn't forget, papa."

"What is that?"

"What does a young lady always want when she goes out shopping?"

"Some money?"

"You've guessed right the first time."

"Here, then," said Mr. Lindsay, placing two gold sovereigns in his daughter's hand. "Mind you don't spend it foolishly."

"Did you ever know me to spend money foolishly, papa?"

"Well, perhaps I had better not express myself on that point. Good-by for a few hours."

Mr. Lindsay went out, and Maud and Harry soon followed. They walked along Collins Street, looking about them with eager interest. They met German, English, French, Chinese; in fact, types of nearly all nationalities. This seemed more strange to Maud than to Harry, for in New York the latter had been accustomed to see a mingling scarcely less great of heterogeneous elements. But in London, or, at any rate, in those parts with which Maud was familiar, there was far less diversity.

"I like this," said Maud, with satisfaction. "Everything looks so new and strange. It's ever so much better fun than being in London. Besides, if I were in London, instead of having you to walk about with me, I should have a stiff old governess calling out every moment, 'You should be more particular about your deportment, Miss Maud.' Now I know you won't say anything about my deportment."

"No, I think not," said Harry. "I don't know what a young lady's deportment ought to be."

"I'm glad of that, for you won't be turning up the whites of your eyes at me in horror at anything I say or do. Oh, there's some ribbon I want! Do you see it in that window? Come in with me, Harry."

They went in, and Maud made a purchase of some ribbon, which she declared to be of a lovely shade.

Now it must be confessed that Maud sometimes allowed her high spirits to carry her too far. She was of an ex-

citable, impulsive temperament. Still her impulses were generous and kindly, and in spite of her faults she was unusually attractive, and it was difficult not to be won over by her frank, affectionate manner.

After buying the ribbon, Maud walked on for some little distance till she came to a gentleman's furnishing store.

"I want to go in here, Harry," she said.

"They only sell articles for gentlemen in there," said Harry.

"Never mind," said Maud. "I know what I want. Come in."

Entering the shop, Maud took the lead, and, advancing to the counter, asked the shopman:

"Will you show me some of your cravats?"

"For yourself, miss?" asked the shopman, surprised.

"We don't keep ladies' goods."

"No, for this young gentleman, my cousin," she added, looking at Harry.

"But, Maud, you mustn't buy anything for me," interposed Harry, in a low voice.

"Yes, I shall," said Maud. "I don't like your cravat at all. I'm going to buy you a nice one."

Harry continued to remonstrate, but he found that opposition only made Maud more determined. So he was obliged to submit, while she purchased for him two handsome neckties.

"There, Harry," she said, placing them in his hand, as they left the shop, "I expect you to put one of them on as soon as you get home."

"What will your father say, Maud?" asked Harry.

"You don't know papa," said Maud. "He will only laugh. Now will you promise?"

"I am sure I am much obliged to you. I wish I could buy you a present. Perhaps I may be able to some time."

"There, don't say anything more about it. What a

lot of carriages there are in the street!—almost as many as in London.”

“I wonder what building that is!” said Harry, soon afterwards.

He pointed to a very handsome structure in the Italian style, on the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets. It was adorned with sculptures, and looked new. In fact, it had just been opened to the public.

“That,” said a gentleman, who overheard him, “is our new postoffice.”

“That reminds me,” said Harry, “I must write home to-night, to let my mother know where I am.”

In fact, Harry did write that same evening, and gave the letter to a servant at the hotel to post. The latter carelessly lost the letter, and then, being afraid of blame, falsely assured Harry that he had posted it. So the fates were once more against Mrs. Raymond, and the missive which would have cheered her heart got swept into a wastebasket, and was consumed with other papers of no value.

CHAPTER XXIX

HARRY FORMS HIS PLANS

A WEEK slipped away very pleasantly. Mr. Lindsay was considerably occupied by business, but he seemed satisfied to trust Maud to the companionship of Harry. Together they went about the city sight-seeing. They visited the several pleasure-grounds in the immediate neighborhood of the city, among them the Carlton and Fitzroy Gardens. Maud freely declared that she had never had so good a time in her life. Harry also enjoyed it; but every now and then the thought would force itself upon him that he ought to be doing something. At present he

was penniless, and but for the liberality of Mr. Lindsay would have hardly known what to do. Besides this, he felt that he ought to be earning money to get home with. He could not help feeling anxious about his mother and sister.

So one evening, after they had returned from an excursion to the Yan Yean Waterworks, about eighteen miles distant from the city, Harry ventured to ask an interview with Mr. Lindsay.

"Maud, you may go out a few minutes," said her father, "while Harry speaks with me."

"Now, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, after Maud had left the room.

"I wanted to consult you about my plans, Mr. Lindsay," said Harry. "I think I ought to go to work."

"Are you discontented?"

"No, sir; you and Maud have been very kind, much kinder than I deserve. I don't like to feel that you are paying all my expenses."

"In return, you relieve me of a good deal of care by undertaking the charge of Maud. If I had not a great deal of confidence in you, I would not be willing to leave you together as much as I have."

"Thank you for your confidence, Mr. Lindsay," said Harry. "I hope you will find that I deserve it. I am glad if I have been able to make you any return for your kindness. Still I cannot help feeling, for my mother's sake, that I ought to find something to do, in order that I may return home as soon as possible."

"I might offer to pay your passage back to New York," said Mr. Lindsay; "but if I were in your place, now that you are out here, I should wish to stay a few months. You may never again have a chance to visit Australia, and it is worth exploring. You can write to your mother, so as to relieve her from anxiety."

"I have done so already," said Harry.

"That's well. Now have you any plans of your own?"

If you have, and will state them, I will give you my advice as to their wisdom."

"I have been hearing a good deal of the gold mines," said Harry, "and I think I should like to try my luck in them. Yesterday I saw a miner who had just returned to Melbourne, after working six months. In that time he made ten thousand dollars, which he brought with him. He is an American, and means to return to New York by the next steamer."

"Yes, there are such cases of extraordinary luck; but I hope you won't be too sanguine, or you will, in all probability, be disappointed. It is not every one who earns even a thousand dollars in that time."

"I know that," said Harry. "Still, my chance would be as good as any, and I might be lucky. At any rate, I have nothing to lose, and should see something of the country."

"That is true. Well, when do you want to start?"

"I should like to start as soon as possible."

"Let it be next Monday morning, then. I will take care that you don't go empty-handed."

"I don't think you ought to give me so much, Mr. Lindsay."

"Leave me to decide that. Now shall we call in Maud? I suppose she is tormented by curiosity to know what we are talking about."

As Harry anticipated, Maud strenuously opposed his plan; but our hero felt that, however pleasant it might be to remain, it was his duty to go. It was of course very agreeable to enjoy the luxurious accommodations of a first-class hotel; but all this was not advancing him in life, and, however kind Mr. Lindsay might be, he felt a degree of delicacy in living at his expense.

Monday morning soon came. Mr. Lindsay called Harry aside, and said:

"My young friend, you will need some money to start

with. In this purse you will find fifty sovereigns (about two hundred and fifty dollars in gold). I think it will support you till you can earn something."

"But, Mr. Lindsay," said Harry, quite overwhelmed by this munificent gift, "I ought not to accept so much money."

"My young friend, when I was a boy, I met a friend who took an interest in me, and helped me on. I will try to do the same by you. I am a rich man and can afford it. Say no more about it, but if you need more, or get into any difficulty, let me know, and I will do what I can to help you."

Our hero clasped the hand of the generous merchant warmly.

"I wish I knew how to thank you," he said.

"You can do so, by justifying my good opinion of you, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, kindly.

"I will try to do that at least," said Harry, earnestly.

That afternoon Harry started for the gold-diggings. He did not go alone. He was fortunate enough to fall in, at one of the hotels, with a man of middle age, a rough-looking man to appearance, but, as Harry afterwards discovered, a man of warm heart and much kindness. This was the way the acquaintance was made.

Harry overheard him speaking of the mines, from which he said he had only recently returned. When he had finished speaking, Harry said:

"May I speak to you a minute, sir?"

"An hour if you like," said the other, kindly.

"I wanted to ask you something about the mines."

"Are you thinking of going there?" asked the stranger, surveying him attentively.

"Yes," said Harry.

"Well, if you have good pluck I have nothing to say. But it ain't everybody that succeeds."

"No, sir, I suppose not; but I have a chance."

"At any rate I have no right to dissuade you, for I was successful."

"Are you willing to tell me about it?"

"No objection at all. I was there four months. In the first three I didn't pay expenses, but in the fourth month I more than made up for all my ill luck. How much do you think I've got lodged with my bankers here?"

"A thousand dollars?"

"A thousand dollars seven times over. Eight thousand dollars I cleared in that last month, and seven of it I have salted down."

Harry's eyes sparkled.

"I only wish I could be as fortunate," he said, earnestly.

"What would you do with your money then?" asked the other.

"I would take care of my mother, and make her comfortable."

"Tell me about your mother—that is, if you don't mind. I've got nobody belonging to me, more's the pity, and perhaps that's the reason why I like to hear about other people's relations."

Harry thereupon began to relate his story, and, assured by the stranger's manner that he was interested, kept on to the end.

"You've had bad luck, boy," he said, at the end; "but maybe it'll turn out for the best. Perhaps you have been sent to this out-of-the-way part of the world on purpose to make your fortune. Who knows?"

"I wish it might turn out so."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the stranger. "I didn't mean to go back to the mines. Seven thousand dollars was enough for me; but I've a great mind to go back with you."

"I wish you would," said Harry. "I'd like to go with

somebody that knows the mines, and can help me with his advice."

"I will go then," said the other, emphatically. "I'm beginning to get tired of the city. But I feel an interest in you, and whether you find any gold or don't find any, you'll need a friend. Perhaps you'll need one more if you are successful than if you fail. What is your name?"

"Harry Raymond."

"And mine is John Bush. I would give you my card if I had any, but they don't care about such things at the mines. Will you take supper with me?"

"No, thank you; I shall be expected back."

"Have a cigar, then?"

"I never smoke, Mr. Bush."

"So much the better, Harry. But it's second nature to me, and I can't leave off. Let me see, what day is it?"

"Friday."

"Then Monday we will start. Call and see me before that time."

"I'll call to-morrow afternoon."

"Very good. We'll arrange then all that needs arranging."

So they parted.

Bush, as Harry saw, was rather rough in his manners, but he seemed kindly. He felt fortunate in meeting him, for his advice would be valuable, especially as he had been successful. Besides, as he began to understand, the undertaking upon which he was about to enter was one of difficulty and perhaps danger, especially for one so young, and he would be the better for a friend like Bush. He saw him again, as promised, on Saturday, and got a list of things which the miner informed him would be necessary.

CHAPTER XXX

THE VICTORIA GOLD MINES

FOUR weeks had passed. The scene has changed for Harry. He is no longer living in a first-class city hotel on the fat of the land, but is "roughing it" at the Victoria mines, seventy miles northwest of Melbourne.

These diggings were of limited extent, occupying not above a square mile; but this square mile was a scene of extraordinary animation and activity. Scattered over it were hundreds of miners, rough-bearded, and clothed with little regard to taste or elegance. But it is not necessary to speak of the miners in general. Our interest is confined to two, and these two are of course Harry and his adviser and friend, John Bush.

At the moment of my introducing them once more to the reader, Bush was seated upon the ground smoking a pipe, while Harry was carefully inspecting the back of a shovel, from which he had just been washing some earth, in search of particles of gold.

"Do you find anything, boy?" asked Bush, taking his pipe from his mouth.

Harry came nearer, that Bush might examine for himself.

"Yes," he said, "there is a little."

"It's the only gold I have found to-day."

"Yes, lad, we are not growing rich very fast, that's a fact. We've been at work more than three weeks, and I don't think we have netted five ounces. I think our chances will be better further up the hill. Here we may, if we are lucky, get three ounces a week—probably not as much. What I want is a nugget."

"But that isn't so easy to find," said Harry.

"No, that's true; but they are found, for all that. Shall I tell you what has made me think of it most?"

"Yes, if you will."

Bush lowered his voice.

"Do you see that spot, about half a mile away, where that rough, gray rock stands?"

"Yes."

"Three nights ago I dreamed that I found a big nugget within a yard of that rock. Now, I never put much faith in dreams; but I've had that same one twice since."

"You have?" said Harry, interested.

"Yes, and you know what they say, 'the third time never fails.' I'm not over-superstitious, Harry, but it's my idea that dream means something. What do you say?"

"It is very singular, at any rate," said Harry.

"At any rate, I've a mind to see what it means, if it means anything. So I'm going to leave you here, and go up there. If I find nothing, well and good, I'll come back. If I'm lucky, we'll share the good luck. What do you say?"

"That you are very generous, Bush." Harry had come to call him so, for they are not very ceremonious at the mines.

"Wait till you have something to thank me for."

The next morning, accordingly, Harry was left alone. He worked all day without meeting with much success. At nightfall Bush came back.

"Well, Bush," said Harry, "have you met with any success?"

"No," said Bush, "and I didn't expect any, not to-day."

"Why not?"

"Because it's only the first day."

"Still you might find something the first day. Did you find nothing?"

"Yes, a few grains of gold; but that I did not care

for. I'm after a nugget. You don't understand what I mean by the first day."

"No."

"I had that dream three times, you know, Harry," said the miner, lowering his voice. "It's impressed on my mind that if I find anything it'll be on the third day."

The next morning Bush left Harry, and returned to the rock.

While Harry was at work, meeting with a little more success than the day before, a rough fellow, Henderson by name, lounged up to him.

"What luck, comrade?" he asked.

"Not much," said Harry. "I haven't made my fortune yet."

"Nor I," said Henderson, emphasizing the declaration with an oath. "I've had cursed bad luck all along."

This was not surprising, for Henderson was a lazy, shiftless fellow, whose main idea was to make a living without earning it. He had come from London, where his reputation was none of the best, and had haunted the mines for a considerable time. Harry understood very well what sort of character he was; so, at present, he hoped that the fellow would soon leave him.

"Where's your pal?" asked Henderson.

"He's trying another place."

"Whereabouts?"

Harry pointed out Bush further up the hill.

"What sent the fool up there?"

"He is not a fool," said Harry, shortly.

"Call him what you like; he's a fool if he expects to find anything up there."

"He has his reasons," said Harry.

"What are they?" inquired Henderson, growing attentive.

"You must ask him if you want to know," said Harry. Henderson went off whistling, and our hero, on think-

ing the matter over, was rather sorry that he had hinted so much about his friend's reasons for going up the hill.

"Bush," he said, when the latter returned, "Henderson has been asking about you to-day. He thought you were a fool to go up there after gold."

"Let him think so if he likes."

"But I am afraid you will think that I am the fool."

"Why so?"

"Because I told him you had reasons for going there."

"Just as well not said, my lad; but no harm's done."

"Have you found anything yet?"

"No; but it's only the second day, you remember."

They had a tent just off the grounds. Here they slept and lived, cooking their food, and keeping house, if it may be called so. When the day's work was over, Bush generally sat down at the door of the tent, and smoked a pipe. He tried to induce Harry to do the same; but our hero had never touched tobacco, and had no cravings for it. So he always declined.

When the pipe was smoked, Bush, if he happened to feel in a communicative mood, often related incidents from his life, which had been an adventurous one. To these narrations Harry always listened with interest.

"I've been a rolling stone, Harry," said his companion. "It might have been different; but all that belong to me are dead. There's nobody I feel an interest in except you. I'm going to keep track of you, and when I die, if I leave anything, you shall have it."

"Don't talk about dying," said Harry. "Perhaps you'll live longer than I."

"Perhaps so; but I'm a deal older, my lad. There's more chance for you."

Bush was a man in the prime of life, and Harry built no hopes on this promise. He only thought that it was very kind, and, it being his nature to repay kindness with

kindness, he felt drawn to his rough companion more closely on learning of his intention.

The next morning Bush returned to his digging on the hillside, and Harry continued at the same place, meeting with a little success, but not much.

At nightfall Bush came back. Before he had come up to him, Harry read in his excited look that something had happened.

"What luck?" he asked.

Bush looked about him cautiously. There were two men within hearing distance, so he lowered his tone. He only uttered five words, but they were of such a character that Harry became no less excited than he.

"The dream has come true!"

This was what he said, and Harry understood at once.

"Let us go and take a walk, my lad."

Harry eagerly complied with his invitation, and they wandered away till they were out of earshot of any one.

"Now tell me all about it," said he.

"It was about the middle of the afternoon," said Bush; "the day was nearly gone, and I began to think what a fool I was to place such dependence upon a dream, even if it were three times repeated. However, it was only the loss of three days, and that wasn't much; so little harm was done, if all came to nothing. Of course I wasn't going to give up till the day was over. Just as I was thinking this, suddenly I struck against something hard. I kept on, not hoping much, till I brought out a nugget—a stunner, I tell you."

"How much would it weigh?" asked Harry.

"I hefted it," said Bush, "and it doesn't weigh an ounce less than twenty-five pounds."

Twenty-five pounds! Harry held his breath in astonishment and delight. He performed a rough calculation hastily in his head, and it dawned upon him that the nugget must be worth at least five thousand dollars.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE DEATH OF BUSH

"WHERE is the nugget? What did you do with it?"

"I buried it in the spot where I found it," said Bush. "I didn't dare to bring it here in open day. There are worthless fellows enough hereabouts that wouldn't hesitate to take my life for the sake of it."

"But you can't help its being found out that you have it."

"No more I can; but in an hour after it is known I start for Melbourne."

"Will you go to-morrow?"

"Yes, my lad, we will both go to-morrow. It's share and share alike, you know. Half the nugget is yours, and if anything happens to me the whole, and all the money I have in Melbourne."

"Thank you, Bush; but I'd rather you'd enjoy it yourself. I'd return the compliment, but I'm afraid all the money I have wouldn't help you much."

"You're young yet. There's time enough for you to become rich, as I doubt not you will."

About half-past nine o'clock Bush and Harry threw themselves down in the shadow of their tent, and courted sleep. They did not take the trouble to undress, but merely wrapped themselves in blankets and lay down.

"I feel more sleepy than usual," said Bush. "Maybe it's the excitement of finding the nugget."

"That's what keeps me awake," said Harry. As he spoke he began to listen intently.

"What's the matter?" asked Bush.

"I thought I heard somebody just outside."

"Somebody passing on their way to their own tent."

"It may be so. I hope whoever it is didn't hear what you said about the nugget."

"They wouldn't find it here, at any rate. Good night, Harry."

"Good night."

Bush turned over, and it was not long before his deep breathing indicated that he was fast asleep. Harry, on the contrary, was wakeful. He had a nervous, restless feeling, as if something were going to happen, though his forebodings were indefinite, and took no decided shape.

At length he fell into a light slumber. How long it lasted he could not tell. But all at once he awoke, to find a man bending over Bush with a knife in his hand. He uttered a cry of horror, and sprung to his feet, but too late! The knife descended, penetrating the breast of the ill-fated miner, who awoke with a groan.

"Give me the nugget quick, boy, or I'll serve you the same way," said the murderer, turning to Harry.

By the uncertain light Harry recognized Henderson.

"Wretch!" he exclaimed, in a tone of horror, "what have you done?"

"There's no time for talking," said Henderson, fiercely; "give me the nugget, or (here he interpolated an oath) I'll send you after Bush."

He raised his knife, but Harry was too quick for him. Fearing danger in some form, he had placed Bush's revolver in his pocket when he lay down. He drew it out suddenly, and, presenting it, fired. The charge took effect in Henderson's right shoulder. With an oath, he dropped the knife, and, staggering out of the tent, fell just outside.

"Well done, my lad!" said Bush, feebly.

"Are you much hurt, Bush?" asked Harry, bending over the sufferer, and speaking anxiously.

"He's done for me, Harry. I shan't live till morning."

By this time the occupants of two neighboring tents had

come up. Seeing Henderson lying groaning just outside, they entered and asked what was the trouble.

It was soon explained.

Now Bush was popular among the miners, and Henderson the reverse, his character being thoroughly understood.

"We'll hang him to the nearest tree," they said.

"Wait till to-morrow," said Harry. "Then let the whole company of miners decide what is to be done."

"Comrades," said Bush, feebly, "come here a moment, I've something to say."

"Say on, Bush."

"That wretch has killed me. To-morrow won't find me alive. That I know full well. Now I want you to witness that this lad here is to have all I possess. There's a matter of fourteen hundred pounds with Bird & Bolton, bankers in Melbourne, and what I have here the lad knows. He is to have all. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Bush."

"I've paper and ink in my tent," said one; "I'll bring them, and draw up a line to that effect, which you shall sign if you can."

"Do so, and quick," said Bush.

In five minutes the paper was brought and the man who proposed this plan, after asking Harry's name, wrote as follows:

"I, John Bush, being about to die, bequeath to Harry Raymond, here present, all that I have, namely, fourteen hundred pounds in the hands of Bird & Bolton, bankers, of Melbourne, and whatever I may leave here."

"I don't know whether that's ship-shape," said the writer; "but if you sign it, we will witness it, and I think it will do."

The pen was placed in Bush's fingers, and he succeeded with some difficulty in affixing his signature, after which

he sank back exhausted. The three men who had come up put down their names as witnesses, or rather two of them did, and the third, who was unable to write, made his mark.

"I'm glad that's done," said Bush, a smile of satisfaction crossing his face. "I can die more content. Give the paper to the lad."

The paper was handed to Harry, who received it with much emotion.

"Thank you, Bush," he said; "but I'd ten times rather you'd live to enjoy this money yourself."

"I don't doubt it, lad; but it wasn't to be. I hope the money'll give you pleasure. Then I can think that I have done some good."

The three men who had witnessed the paper next turned their attention to Henderson.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked, nervously.

"You'll see in the morning," said one, grimly.

He was securely bound, and carried to one of the tents, where he was kept under secure guard. Meanwhile Harry watched beside the suffering man.

"I wish there was a doctor near by," he said.

"No doctor could do me any good now," said Bush. "I've got my death-wound."

Indeed it seemed so. The knife had done its work so surely that not all the doctors in the world could have saved the miner from death. About four o'clock in the morning he died. Then Harry, exhausted with watching, fell asleep beside his dead comrade, and slept heavily till he was aroused by a rough shake.

He looked up, and recognized one of the three men who had come to their tent the night before.

"Are you coming to see Henderson swing?" he asked.

"What?"

"We've tried him, and he's to be hung as soon as they can get a rope."

Justice is swift in mining communities. It was not yet seven o'clock in the morning, but the guilty man had already been tried, and punishment was to be inflicted.

Harry shuddered.

"No," he said; "I don't want to see it."

"He killed your friend."

"I know he did; but I pity the poor wretch. I suppose he ought to be punished; but I don't want to see it."

"You're too soft-hearted; but just as you like."

Half an hour after, as Harry still lay in his tent, a miner came to him.

"Is it all over?" asked Harry, sick at heart.

"Yes, it's all over. Henderson won't prowling round any more."

During the day Bush was buried. The funeral ceremonies were slight. A grave was dug on the hillside, and the body was lowered down, and hastily covered over. Harry procured a piece of board, which he set up for a gravestone, cutting on its surface, as well as he could, his friend's name in rude capitals—JOHN BUSH.

He took into his confidence the three miners who have been already spoken of, and told them about the nugget, feeling that it might prove a source of danger to himself, as well as Bush, unless he availed himself of the assistance of others. He offered to divide a thousand dollars between them, if they would help him to get it safe to Melbourne. They were witnesses to the paper which Bush had signed, and Harry thought it probable that their presence and testimony might be needed to satisfy Bird & Bolton, first of the death of Bush, and next of his rightful claim to the money belonging to the deceased, which the firm had on deposit.

The three miners were quite willing to accompany Harry. The sum which he offered them would probably far exceed their earnings during the time occupied, even after deducting all necessary expenses. A day later, there-

fore, Harry, escorted by his three mining acquaintances, with the costly nugget in charge, started on his return to Melbourne.

CHAPTER XXXII

HARRY DECIDES TO LEAVE AUSTRALIA

"I wish Harry were here," said Maud Lindsay, discontentedly. "It's so lonesome since he went away."

"Upon my word, that is complimentary," said her father. "You don't appear to value my company."

"Of course I do, papa; but then you know you are away a good deal of the time. Besides, you are older than I am."

"That is unfortunately true. I believe most fathers are older than their daughters."

"Have you heard from Harry yet?"

"Not since the letter of last week. He reported then that he had not found much gold."

"I wish he would make his fortune quick, so that he could come back."

"I begin to think you're in love with Harry, Maud."

"I begin to think so too, papa. Would you object to him for a son-in-law?"

"Just at present I might. I don't think you are old enough to be married."

"Don't be foolish, papa. Of course I don't want to be married till I am old enough."

This conversation took place on the morning of Harry's return to Melbourne. Indeed, Maud had hardly ceased speaking when a knock was heard at the door. Maud rose to open it. She was overwhelmed with delight when, in the visitor, in spite of his rough garb, she recognized our hero, the loss of whose company she had been deploring.

"O Harry, how glad I am to see you!" she exclaimed, actually hugging Harry in her delight.

Harry was rather embarrassed at the unexpected warmth of his reception, but felt that it would be impolite not to kiss Maud in return, and accordingly did so.

"I am glad to see you, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, advancing to meet him. "Have you just arrived from the mines?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope no ill luck has hurried you back."

"Partly ill luck, and partly good luck. Bush found a nugget of gold worth at least five thousand dollars."

"Then you had nothing to do with finding it?"

"We were partners, and he insisted that half of it belonged to me."

"That was generous. So you have come back to dispose of it. Is Bush with you?"

"No," said Harry, soberly. "He is dead."

Harry seated himself, and gave a brief account of the murderous attack upon Bush, and his death, mentioning in the conclusion that he was the heir of the miner's property.

"Let me see the paper," said Mr. Lindsay.

Harry exhibited the paper signed by Bush just before he died.

"Who are the witnesses whose names are written here?"

"The three men who came up at the time of the murder."

"You will have to send for them to prove the validity of this document, and satisfy the bankers that you are the Harry Raymond to whom the money is bequeathed."

"They are here in Melbourne. I brought them with me."

"You are sharper than I thought. What made you think of this?"

"I thought their testimony might be needed. Besides, I was liable to be attacked, and perhaps murdered on the way, if it were discovered that I had the nugget; so I

offered them a thousand dollars between them if they would come up with me.”

“It is a considerable sum, but I think you were wise to pay it. I know these bankers with whom your friend’s money is deposited. If you desire it, I will take the matter in hand, and present your claim at once.”

“That is what I wanted to ask, Mr. Lindsay. If you will be so kind, I shall be very much obliged to you.”

“Then we had better lose no time. I have an hour to spare. Suppose you come with me now.”

Messrs. Bird & Bolton were in their banking office.

“Good morning, Mr. Lindsay,” said Mr. Bird, as that gentleman entered. “Is there anything I can do for you this morning?”

“Not for me, but for this young man,” said Mr. Lindsay, presenting Harry.

Mr. Bird looked at Harry in some surprise, for he was still clad in his rough miner’s costume.

“You have fourteen hundred pounds left on deposit by John Bush, a miner, if I am rightly informed.”

“Your information is correct, Mr. Lindsay.”

“John Bush is dead. This young man, whom I previously knew, was his partner, and to him Bush bequeathed all of which he died possessed.”

“I suppose your young friend has proof to substantiate his claim,” said Mr. Bird, cautiously.

Here Mr. Lindsay produced the paper already referred to.

“This seems correct, but the witnesses ought to be produced. They might be men of straw.”

“Of course. In such a matter, you are right to be cautious. The witnesses are all in Melbourne, and shall be produced,” said Mr. Lindsay.

“I have no doubt all will be satisfactory; but, of course, as a man of business, Mr. Lindsay, you will not be surprised that we require absolute proof.”

"You are perfectly right in doing so. I should do the same in your place. We propose to bring the witnesses here, that you may satisfy yourself that all is genuine, and as it should be. If you will appoint an hour that will suit your convenience they shall be on hand."

"To-morrow at eleven, then."

"Very well."

After a little more conversation Mr. Lindsay and Harry withdrew.

"There is one thing more that I would like your advice about," said Harry.

"What is that? Of course you shall have it."

"I want to sell my nugget to the best advantage."

"Where is it?"

"I will bring it to the hotel at any time. It is in charge of the three miners."

"I will go around with you to the place where they are stopping, and then will call with you upon a man who deals in gold. The matter may as well be settled at once."

The three miners had put up at an inferior inn in a narrow street running out of the principal avenue in Melbourne. Luckily they were at home when Harry called with Mr. Lindsay.

The latter found a certain reluctance on their part to give up the nugget.

"You see," said one, "this young chap has promised us two hundred pounds between us. Maybe he will forget all about that, and leave us to shift for ourselves."

"Do you think I would be so mean?" exclaimed Harry.

"The man is right," said Mr. Lindsay. "He wants to have everything made sure."

"But I can't pay them till the gold is sold."

"That's true; nor would it be advisable, for you want their testimony before the bankers. But I think I see a way to arrange matters."

"How is that?" asked Harry.

"I will advance one-half the sum you promised at once, and guarantee the payment of the balance to-morrow afternoon, after they have rendered in their testimony at the banking house."

It will not be necessary to follow out the business in all its details. There were some unexpected delays; but at the end of a fortnight the whole matter was settled, and Harry found himself, not indeed rich, but richer than he ever anticipated.

The gold nugget was found to be worth five thousand four hundred and fifty dollars. The money in the banker's hands, with accruing interest, amounted to seven thousand and seventy-five. The account was rendered in English currency, but for convenience sake I have reduced it to Federal money. This, then, was the final statement of Harry's inheritance:

On deposit with Bird & Bolton.....	\$7,075.00
Sum realized from gold nugget....	5,450.00
<hr/>	
Total.....	\$12,525.00

From this amount must be deducted the thousand dollars which Harry agreed to pay to the three miners. When this was done, he was left with eleven thousand five hundred and twenty-five dollars, which, for a boy of his age, was certainly a very comfortable capital.

When the matter was settled, Harry began to bethink himself of home, and told Mr. Lindsay that he felt it his duty to go back to America as soon as possible and gladden his mother's heart with the news of his good fortune.

"You are right, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, promptly. "Your first duty is to your mother. I will not say a word to dissuade you from it."

But if Mr. Lindsay forbore to dissuade Harry, Maud was not so forbearing. She was exceedingly dissatisfied at the idea of losing the society of our hero.

"Why can't we all sail in the same steamer, papa?" she said.

"Because, Maud, I am not ready to go back yet. My business is not finished."

"Then I shall never see Harry again."

"I think you will. I have invited Harry to visit us in England next summer, and I think he will accept the invitation."

"Will you, Harry?" asked Maud, eagerly.

"I will if I can, Maud," said Harry; "and I think I can."

"I am afraid you will forget me, Harry."

"I certainly shall not, Maud. You have been too kind for that. As soon as I get back to America I shall write to you, and let you know how I arrived."

Maud was forced to be satisfied with this promise. Harry made all needed preparations for his return, and a week from the time when his affairs were settled, he took cabin passage on a steamer bound from Melbourne to New York. We must precede him, and inquire how matters have been going on in Vernon during his absence.

CHAPTER XXXIII

SQUIRE TURNER SPINS HIS WEB

HARRY's disappearance inflicted a blow upon Mrs. Raymond from which she did not easily recover. Coming so soon after her husband's sudden death, she felt that her life had indeed become desolate, and but that she knew her life was necessary to little Katy, she would not have cared to live. But for Katy's sake she tried to bear up as well as she could against her double loss.

But Mrs. Raymond had another cause for anxiety, and that a serious one. During her husband's life she had al-

ways lived in comfort, and never felt any anxiety about the future. But now whatever money was to be earned for the support of the little household must be earned by herself, for of course Katy was too young to earn anything, and must for some years be kept at school.

Squire Turner occasionally called on Mrs. Raymond, feeling that it was for his interest to assume the rôle of a disinterested friend. One evening, about six weeks after Harry's disappearance, he took his cane and walked over to the little cottage. The widow had come to look forward with interest to his visits, feeling in her position the need of a friend. She welcomed him, accordingly, with an evident pleasure, which he did not fail to notice.

"I hope you are well, Mrs. Raymond," he said, removing his hat, and taking the chair which the widow brought forward.

"I am well in health, Squire Turner," was the reply, "but I am very unhappy. I sometimes feel as if my sorrows were greater than I can bear."

"You have Katy left."

"Yes, Katy is a dear little girl. But for her I should not care to live. But for her and the hope that Harry may come back some time——"

"While there is life there is hope," said the squire. "I mean while we are not certain of death, there is ground for hope."

"If there was anything I could do," replied the widow; "but I can only wait, and the suspense is very wearing."

"Of course, I quite feel for you. Depend upon it, I shall do what I can to relieve your anxiety whenever I see clearly what to do. You give me credit for that?"

"Yes, Squire Turner, I know you are a true friend. The time was when I did you injustice; but I see more clearly now."

If Squire Turner had had any sense of shame he would have blushed at this testimony from the woman whom he

had done so much to injure; but his feelings were not very keen, and he only listened with complacency, perceiving that he had made good progress in securing the widow's confidence. All his plans seemed to be working well thus far. He was now ready to take the next step, and this was to get Mrs. Raymond into his power by placing her under pecuniary obligations.

"I hope you will excuse me one question which I am about to ask," he said, "and believe that it is dictated, not by idle curiosity, but my interest in your welfare. Do you not find considerable difficulty in earning enough money to defray your expenses?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Raymond, "that is one of my troubles. Katy and I have few wants; but I find it costs a good deal for food and fuel and clothes."

"Of course."

"Especially as I have no way of earning except by the needle. Sewing is very poorly paid."

"That is quite true. By the way, Mrs. Raymond, I shall be glad to give you all the work I have in that line, and to pay you a fair price for doing it."

"Thank you, Squire Turner. It will be a favor to me."

"And if you find you can't meet your expenses, don't hesitate at any time to apply to me for a loan."

"You are very kind, Squire Turner, but I don't like to borrow money."

"As to that, I can show you a way that will relieve your feeling."

"What's that?"

"You are aware that this house belongs to you, with the exception of a mortgage of four hundred dollars, which I hold. Now it is probably worth over a thousand dollars," he answered, courteously.

"Mr. Raymond considered it worth, with the land, twelve hundred dollars."

"Ahem!" said the squire, who had his reasons for un-

derrating the property; "it was probably worth that to him, but I don't think it would fetch much over a thousand, if it were brought to a sale. However, that is not to the purpose. I only mentioned it to suggest that the property might serve as ample security for any sum you might wish to borrow, so that you need not feel delicate about any loans you might be forced to ask."

"That is true," said Mrs. Raymond. "I did not think of that."

"Have you a supply of money on hand at present?"

Mrs. Raymond was forced to acknowledge that she had less than a dollar in the house.

"I thought it might be so," he said, "and therefore I came provided. You had better let me lend you fifty dollars."

After some hesitation Mrs. Raymond consented to take the money.

"If you will let me have a sheet of paper I will draw up a note, which you can sign," said the squire, smoothly. "I know that it will be more agreeable to your feelings to regard the loan as a business transaction rather than as a favor."

How could Mrs. Raymond feel otherwise than grateful to the man who entered so delicately into her feelings? She unhesitatingly acquiesced in what he proposed, and brought forward writing materials, with which Squire Turner drew up a note offhand, which Mrs. Raymond signed. He then drew from his pocketbook ten five-dollar bills, which he handed to the widow, depositing the note in his wallet.

Squire Turner continued, as he had begun, to act as a sympathizing friend of Mrs. Raymond. From time to time he supplied her with money as she required it, in each case, however, taking her note for the amount, and, when the sum was sufficient to warrant it, securing it by an additional mortgage upon the property. When he proposed

this, it was ostensibly to spare the feelings of the widow, and prevent her from feeling any delicacy or sense of pecuniary obligations.

"You see, Mrs. Raymond," he said, smoothly, "you have no cause to feel grateful to me. Every pecuniary transaction between us is upon a strict business basis. I know you would prefer that it should be so."

"I know that you are very kind, Squire Turner, and I can't help feeling grateful, though you tell me there is no occasion for my being so."

Meanwhile, Squire Turner had kept in constant correspondence with Mr. Robinson, the Milwaukee lawyer, touching the land grant already referred to, and it became necessary for him to obtain Mrs. Raymond's authority to act for her in the matter. It was important for him to do this, without leading her to suspect that it was a matter of much moment. One evening he introduced the subject as if casually:

"By the way, Mrs. Raymond, your son Harry placed in my hands some time since a land warrant belonging to your late father, with the request that I would ascertain whether it was worth anything."

"I remember it now that you mention it, Squire Turner," said the widow. "I suppose it is worthless."

"No," said the squire, candidly. "I think you may get a little something for it. I suppose fifty or a hundred dollars would be acceptable."

"It would be more than I ever expected to realize from it. Do you really think it is likely to amount to as much as that?"

"I really do—that is, I hope so. If you are content to give me authority to act for you, I will do the best I can, and, of course, I shall charge you nothing for my services."

"How kind you are, Squire Turner. I will sign anything you think best."

"I have brought a paper properly drawn up, empowering me to act for you," said the squire. "I will see that you have no trouble in the matter."

Here he produced the paper, and Mrs. Raymond unhesitatingly affixed her signature.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AN UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL

THE next week Squire Turner started for Milwaukee. He did not mention this as his destination in the village, but stated that he had business in Chicago and beyond, not caring to excite any suspicions in Vernon, which was just large enough for everybody to feel interested in everybody else's affairs. But in reality he stopped in Chicago only long enough to take dinner, and then hurried on to Milwaukee, where he proceeded at once to the office of Mr. Robinson.

"I am glad to see you, Squire Turner," said the lawyer, rising from the table at which he was seated; "the fact is, I was just thinking over your business."

"Well, what is the prospect?" asked Squire Turner.

"Excellent. The parties at first were disposed to bluff me off, and pooh-pooh our claims; but they have probably taken legal advice and have changed their tune in consequence."

"Do they propose anything?"

"Yes; they offer five thousand dollars for the surrender of the land warrant, which will insure them a perfect title."

"Five thousand dollars," repeated Squire Turner, slowly. "Of course, that is a good sum compared with the original value of the warrant; but——"

"Small when the present value of the land is considered. Precisely so."

“How much do you think I ought to get?”

“Not less than ten thousand dollars.”

“Is there a chance of their coming to that figure?”

“Yes.”

“I should prefer friendly compromise to initiating legal proceedings, even if I get less.”

Squire Turner had two reasons for this preference. First, he knew well enough the delays of the law, and that years might pass before the matter could be settled, if once the law should be appealed to. But, more than this, such a course would produce more or less publicity, and Mrs. Raymond might hear of it, which was very far from his wishes. But a compromise could be effected without any public mention of the affair, and this would be safer and more speedy.

“By the way, Turner, are you personally interested in this matter?” asked the lawyer.

“Yes,” said the squire. “The claimant is a friend of mine, and I have advanced money on it, considering it a fair security. If she loses, I also become a loser.”

This was not true, except indirectly, for, as the reader knows, Squire Turner could only lose by being obliged to forego his purpose of marriage.

“You have—excuse my inquiring—authority to act in the matter?”

The squire drew out the document to which he had obtained Mrs. Raymond’s signature, as described in the preceding chapter. Mr. Robinson glanced at it.

“Quite correct,” he said. “Well, then, what shall we decide?”

“Stand out for ten thousand dollars,” said the squire. “I don’t mind a few months’ delay. In fact, for some reasons, the delay will be satisfactory to me.”

“If such are your views, we shall probably gain our point,” said Mr. Robinson. “It will take some time to bring the parties up to the point, but in six months I think

it can be effected, if we stand firm. Will six months be too long?"

"Not at all. We will stand firm."

I must stop here to explain why it was that Squire Turner was in no hurry to bring the matter to a conclusion. Nine months only had passed since Mr. Raymond's death, and an offer of marriage on his part to Mrs. Raymond would, he felt, be considered premature, and be very probably declined. Now, if the matter was settled at once in favor of Mrs. Raymond, she was liable at any time to be made aware of it in some unforeseen way, and if thus made pecuniarily independent, the squire felt that she would prefer not to contract a second marriage. He counted upon obtaining her consent for the sake of her child, whom he could support in comfort and afford more advantages, which otherwise the mother would be quite unable to provide. It therefore suited his purposes better that the matter should be protracted for, say six months, when a sufficient time would have elapsed, since Mr. Raymond's death, to make his proposal proper.

Squire Turner returned from his Western trip, and, of course, took an early opportunity to call on Mrs. Raymond.

"Did you have a pleasant journey?" asked the widow.

"Very. By the way, I stopped at Milwaukee on my return."

"Did you hear anything of the warrant?"

"Yes; I find there is a chance of realizing seventy-five or a hundred dollars from it. It is not much, to be sure——"

"It will be a good deal to me. You are certainly very kind, Squire Turner. You must deduct any expenses which you have incurred about it."

"I couldn't think of it, Mrs. Raymond," said the squire, in a cordial manner. "It is a pleasure to me to serve my friends."

“How much I have misjudged Squire Turner in times past!” thought Mrs. Raymond, and she thanked him again.

Two months later Squire Turner received a letter from the Milwaukee lawyer, in which he stated that the parties had increased their offer to seven thousand dollars.

Squire Turner replied that the offer was not satisfactory, and that the negotiation must proceed. He was in no particular hurry, he said.

So negotiations continued until the six months had nearly passed. It seemed pretty clear now that Squire Turner’s ultimatum would shortly be accepted, nine thousand dollars having been already offered. Mr. Robinson advised his client to come out to Milwaukee, feeling confident that, if he were personally present, the matter could be satisfactorily arranged on his own terms. To this the squire was not averse; but first he wished to see what were his chances of success with the widow.

Accordingly, he dressed himself with more than usual care, one evening, and walked round to the house of Mrs. Raymond. He had become such a frequent visitor there of late that his visits never excited surprise.

“Have you heard anything from Milwaukee, Squire Turner?” asked the widow.

“Not very recently. I don’t doubt, however, that matters will turn out favorably. In fact, I am so confident that I am quite willing to advance you fifty dollars on the warrant.”

“Thank you, Squire Turner; but just at present I have a little money on hand. I am glad you think I shall get it.”

“I feel sure of it.”

There was a moment’s pause, and then he proceeded: “There is a matter about which I would like to speak to you alone, Mrs. Raymond, if you would be willing to send Katy out of the room for a few minutes.”

"Certainly. Katy, you may go upstairs for a little while."

Katy left the room, and Squire Turner found himself alone with the widow. He drew his chair a little nearer and commenced:

"I am about to make you a proposal, Mrs. Raymond, which I think will be mutually advantageous, and I hope you will regard it in that light. I have had it in view for some time, but felt delicate about introducing the subject before. I hope you regard me as a friend."

"Indeed, you have been a true friend to me, Squire Turner."

"I have tried to be," said the squire, modestly. "But I will not waste time, but at once make my proposal. You have lost your husband, I my wife. I need some one to superintend my house, and look after my son, while you need a protector who is able to give you a good home. Will you be my wife?"

"Indeed, Squire Turner," said Mrs. Raymond, startled, "I never anticipated that your proposal would be of such a character."

"And yet, why should you be surprised? Need I recall that time, years since, when we were both younger, and I made the same offer? You see my attachment is no new thing. You preferred another, but he has been taken from you."

"I thank you very much for your kind offer," said Mrs. Raymond, "but I have never thought of marrying again since my husband's death. I do not think it would be right."

"I think your late husband would favor it. Think of your dependent condition. You have hard work to earn a poor living, and when the four hundred dollars which remain to you are gone, you will indeed be in a different position."

"That is true."

"Consider, on the other hand, that I could give you a good home at once, and relieve you from all pecuniary anxiety. Your little Katy needs better advantages than you can give her. She seems to have a taste for music. I should have her at once commence lessons on the piano, and would take care that she should receive as good an education as money could procure. For her sake, Mrs. Raymond, I hope you will reconsider your decision."

"If I thought it would be right," said the widow, hesitatingly.

"I will not ask you to decide at once. Take three days for it, and if you have any friend whom you trust, ask that friend's advice. Will you do so?"

"Yes," said the widow, "I will do as you advise. I will think over your proposal, and I will try to decide in three days' time."

"Then I will call on Tuesday to receive your decision. Let me hope it will be favorable."

Squire Turner left the cottage in a satisfied frame of mind. He felt sure that for Katy's sake Mrs. Raymond would accept him.

CHAPTER XXXV

IN WHICH TWO STRANGERS PUT IN AN APPEARANCE

MRS. RAYMOND consulted with a friend, according to Squire Turner's suggestion, and was advised by all means to accept.

"It will be such an advantage for Katy, you know," her friend said.

"If Harry were at home I would not do it," said the widow. "I don't think he would like it. As it is, it is only for Katy's sake that I give my consent."

So when Squire Turner called for his answer he found it to be favorable. He urged immediate marriage. For this he had his reasons, as he desired to be in a situation to complete his Western negotiation.

Mrs. Raymond would have preferred to postpone the marriage for six months; but she could assign no reasons for it, and so at length yielded to the squire's request, and that day four weeks was appointed for the wedding. The next day Squire Turner went to the city, and selected a handsome silk dress-pattern, which was forwarded by express to Mrs. Raymond, with an intimation that it was for her wedding-dress. She could not do otherwise than accept it, and the village dressmaker was sent for at once to superintend its making up.

Time slipped by, and the day for the marriage had nearly arrived. The wedding-dress was completed, and various other articles, which had also been sent through the squire's liberality, lay upon the bed in Mrs. Raymond's chamber.

"What a beautiful dress, mother!" said Katy. "I wish you would try it on."

More to please the little girl than herself, Mrs. Raymond consented and tried on the new dress. She was still a fine-looking woman, as I have already said, and the new dress became her well. Little Katy looked at her in admiration, and said, "How beautiful you look, mother! I wish Harry were here to see you."

They were in a room on the second floor, and there was no one in the lower part of the house. Just then the front door was heard to open.

"Go downstairs, Katy," said Mrs. Raymond. "Somebody has come in. See who it is, and come and tell me."

Katy went down, and directly Mrs. Raymond heard a loud exclamation. She could not exactly make it out, but it sounded like "Harry!" A wild hope sprang up in her heart. Without thinking of her bridal dress she hurried

downstairs. She was not deceived. There stood Harry, her Harry, taller and manlier than when she saw him last, but with the same frank, handsome face, holding his little sister in his arms.

"Harry!" exclaimed Mrs. Raymond, in joyful surprise; and in a moment the long-separated son and mother embraced.

"God be thanked for your return, my dear son!" she said. "Where have you been all this long time?"

"It will take a long time to tell, mother. I have just returned from Australia."

"From Australia!" exclaimed Mrs. Raymond, in amazement.

"Yes, mother, it's a long story. I will tell it by and by. But how well you are looking! And (for the first time noticing his mother's elegant dress) how handsomely you are dressed! Have you come into a fortune since I went away?"

"No, Harry," said Mrs. Raymond, confused.

"I expected to find you in poverty, perhaps in want," said Harry, puzzled more and more. "I didn't think to see you dressed like a queen."

"It's mother's wedding-dress, Harry," said little Katy, who did not share her mother's embarrassment.

"Your wedding-dress, mother!" Harry exclaimed, his face clouding. "Who are you going to marry?"

"I did it for the best, Harry," said his mother, uneasily; "and he has been very kind."

"Who is he, mother?"

"Squire Turner. He——"

"Squire Turner!" exclaimed Harry, vehemently, springing to his feet; "it is not possible you are thinking of marrying him. He is the worst enemy we have."

"No, Harry," said his mother; "you are mistaken there. You must, at least, do him justice. He has been very kind, very kind, indeed. I don't know how I should

have got along, in the sad days after we lost you, but for his kindness."

"So you think he has been kind, mother?" said Harry, with a peculiar expression.

"Very kind, as Katy can tell you," said Mrs. Raymond. "Not that this is reason enough to marry him. But it is for Katy's sake I am going to do it."

"Then you don't love him, mother?"

"I shall never love any one again, Harry. My love was buried in your father's grave."

"I am glad of that, at any rate; glad that you don't love this scoundrel——"

"Harry, Harry, don't talk so, I beg of you."

"Have you any idea why I went away so suddenly? I don't mean to New York; but how it happened that I disappeared from New York?"

"No, Harry, I know nothing of it."

"Then I will tell you. Squire Turner, whom you think so kind, had me kidnapped on board a vessel bound for China, and I started on my long voyage without any chance of letting you know what had become of me."

"But what interest would Squire Turner have in getting you out of the country?" asked Mrs. Raymond.

"I think I know of a reason, mother," said Harry; "but I don't care to mention it now."

"You said the vessel was bound for China. How, then, did you get to Australia?"

"I was thrown into the sea," said Harry, "and, after floating about for many hours, was picked up at length by a vessel bound for Australia."

"You have, indeed, encountered great perils, my dear son," said his mother, shuddering. "Thank God, you escaped them all, and are once more restored to us."

Harry was about to question his mother more particularly respecting her trials during his absence, when a knock was heard at the door.

"I will open it, mother," said Harry.

Opening the front door he saw on the step a well-dressed gentleman, whom he did not recognize.

"Does Mrs. Raymond live here?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sir. Would you like to see her?"

"I should like to do so. I am managing some business for her."

Here he offered his card, which bore the name:

"FRANCIS ROBINSON,

"Attorney-at-Law,

"MILWAUKEE."

"Won't you walk in, sir?" said Harry, considerably surprised.

"This is my mother," he said, introducing the lawyer. "Mother, this is Mr. Robinson, of Milwaukee, who says he is attending to some business there for you."

"Will you be seated, sir?" said Mrs. Raymond. "I had not heard your name, but I suppose it's about the land warrant."

"May I inquire," said Harry, "how much my mother is likely to realize for the land warrant?"

"The other party has agreed to your terms. They will compromise without an appeal to law, agreeing to pay ten thousand dollars.

"Ten thousand dollars!" repeated Mrs. Raymond, in bewilderment. "Surely there is some mistake. Squire Turner told me I might realize from seventy-five to a hundred dollars from it."

"Seventy-five to a hundred dollars!" he repeated. "Are you sure you understood Squire Turner aright?"

"Certainly. He told me only a fortnight since that he thought I would obtain this sum, and I felt lucky to get anything at all."

"There is a great mistake somewhere," said the lawyer, significantly. "Of one thing, however, I can assure you—that the ten thousand dollars will actually be paid."

"Mother," said Harry, "have you given Squire Turner authority to act for you in this matter?"

"I have—that is, I signed a paper which he said gave him such authority."

"He showed me that paper," said Mr. Robinson.

"Can my mother revoke that authority?" asked Harry.

"Undoubtedly."

"Then she does revoke it at once—am I not right, mother?"

"If you think best, Harry."

"I do think best. It is evident that Squire Turner has not been faithful to your interests. If you wish, I will act as your agent."

"But you are so young, Harry."

"I have seen something of the world, mother, since I left home. I shall not hesitate to take charge of the business. Mr. Robinson will assist me."

"Certainly. I shall be happy to do whatever I can."

"Then, Mr. Robinson, if it would not be too much trouble, and you can spare the time, will you give me a history of the case, and explain how matters at present stand?"

"I see," said the lawyer, smiling, "that you know how to come to the point. I will endeavor to imitate you."

He made a brief and comprehensive statement, which Harry readily understood.

"Have you the warrant, Mr. Robinson?" asked our hero.

"Yes; it was committed to me by Squire Turner."

"That is all right. I was afraid he had it in his possession, and that might give us trouble."

"No; it is out of his power to affect the arrangements already made."

“How long shall you remain East, Mr. Robinson?” asked Harry. “I shall wish to see you again.”

“I shall remain in New York a week, my headquarters being at the Astor House.”

“I will call upon you there. Meanwhile, we leave this matter entirely in your hands.”

Mr. Robinson was about to go, when little Katy, who had been looking out of the window, suddenly exclaimed:

“Mother, I see Squire Turner coming up the road. I think he is coming here.”

All present looked at each other in momentary doubt as to what was best to be done. Harry was the first to grasp the situation.

“Mr. Robinson,” he said, “will you be kind enough to accompany me to another room, and wait? I would like your presence by and by. Mother, while you are upstairs and changing your dress, Katy will admit Squire Turner, and tell him you will be down directly. Mind, Katy, not a word about my having got home, or about Mr. Robinson’s being here. When you come down, mother, you must tell Squire Turner that you have changed your mind about marrying him, and, if he makes any objection, call me in.”

“I see you are a master of strategy, my young friend,” said Mr. Robinson, smiling. “I place myself unhesitatingly in your hands.”

Harry’s programme was instantly carried out, and one minute later Squire Turner knocked at the door of the cottage.

CHAPTER XXXVI

CONCLUSION

“Is your mother at home, Katy?” asked Squire Turner, as the child opened the outer door.

“Yes, sir,” said Katy. “She’s upstairs.”

“Will you tell her I wish to see her?”

"Yes, sir."

Squire Turner walked in, and took a seat without ceremony, as was natural, considering that it was the house of his future wife. Katy went upstairs, and presently Mrs. Raymond, who had changed her dress, came down.

"I thought you were out of town," she said, trying to speak in her usual manner, but succeeding with difficulty, for she could not help thinking of the squire's agency in driving Harry from home.

"I returned sooner than I anticipated. By the way, I think I have found a tenant for this cottage."

"I don't think that will be necessary, Squire Turner. I shall probably continue to occupy it myself."

"How can that be?" demanded the squire, surprised. "As my wife, you will, of course, live in my house."

"I shall not become your wife. I have changed my mind."

"What does this mean?" he demanded, angrily. "Why do you trifle with me thus?"

"I am afraid, Squire Turner, you have not been so much my friend as I supposed."

"In what respect have I failed to act as your friend?"

"O, Squire Turner!" exclaimed the widow, impulsively, "how could you contrive such a wicked plot against my poor boy? How could you send him to sea, and not tell me, when you saw I was breaking my heart at his absence?"

The squire flushed at this unexpected accusation. How in the world, he thought, could Mrs. Raymond have heard of his agency in the abduction of Harry?

"I don't know what you mean," he said; but his face belied his words.

"It was wicked," said Mrs. Raymond, "to endanger his life and rob me of happiness!"

"Who makes this absurd charge against me?" demanded the squire.

The door opened, and Harry entered.

"Squire Turner," he said, "I don't suppose you are very glad to see me. Probably you did not expect me home so soon; perhaps not at all."

"Where did you come from?" stammered the squire.

"From Australia."

"From Australia—I thought——"

"Yes, you thought I was bound to China," said Harry, coolly. "But I left the *Sea Eagle*, not liking Captain Hartley Brandon very much, and went to Australia instead."

This was a surprise to the squire, who answered, doggedly, however, "you seem to be laboring under a strange mistake, Harry. What possible motive could I have for sending you away?"

"I can think of one," said Harry, significantly; "but perhaps you would not like to have me mention it."

Again the squire's face flushed, for he comprehended the allusion very well. He turned to Mrs. Raymond.

"Am I to understand, Mrs. Raymond," he said, "that you break your engagement to me?"

"I should hardly expect to marry you now, after all that has happened."

"Then," said the squire, angrily, "I may as well go; but, before going," he added, with a sneer, "I congratulate you on securing a new dress at my expense."

"How is this, mother?" asked Harry.

"Squire Turner gave me my wedding outfit," said the widow, embarrassed.

"Don't let that trouble you, mother," said Harry. "Squire Turner, if you will let me know the expense which you have incurred, I shall have pleasure in paying the bill."

"I think you will have a little difficulty in paying a hundred and twenty dollars," sneered the squire.

In reply Harry drew out his pocketbook and took there-

from a hundred-dollar bill and a twenty, and laid them on the table.

"I think you will find that correct," he said.

"Where did you get all this money?" the squire asked, in astonishment.

"My voyage turned out better than you anticipated," said Harry. "If you still hold a mortgage on this house, I will take it up whenever you desire."

It is hard to say whether Squire Turner was more pleased at getting back his money, or disappointed at the intelligence of Harry's good fortune; but, on the whole, it is safe to say that the latter feeling predominated.

He took the bills, and again took his hat to go, when he was stopped by Harry.

"If you will stay five minutes longer," he said, "I should like to ask you one or two questions. My mother tells me that you have been trying to obtain money for the land warrant I placed in your hands."

"Yes," said the squire.

"May I ask what success you have met with?"

"Probably she will realize a hundred dollars from it."

"On the whole, Squire Turner, we will not trouble you to do anything more about it. I think I can do better than that."

"I have your mother's authority to act as her agent. You are a boy, and not competent to manage it."

"My mother recalls her authority."

"Is this true?" demanded the squire, hotly.

"Yes," said the widow. "Now that Harry is at home, I think he can attend to it."

"Then you won't realize a cent," snapped the squire. "But you can't blame me. I have been doing my best for you, and that is all the thanks I get. I shall now charge you with the expenses I have incurred in the matter, though I did not intend to do so."

"If the bill is a fair one it shall be paid," said Harry.

He went to the door and called "Mr. Robinson!" That gentleman entered. Squire Turner looked at him as if he could not believe the testimony of his eyes.

"Mr. Robinson!" he ejaculated.

"Yes," said the lawyer; "I was called East, unexpectedly, and thought I would make a call on you to report progress. Not finding you at home, I inquired for Mrs. Raymond, who, by the way, I found had an entirely erroneous idea of the value of the warrant. You will be glad to know that I have succeeded in obtaining an offer of ten thousand dollars, which will be paid over within a month."

This last blow was too much for Squire Turner. Foiled at all points, he dashed his hat angrily upon his head, and rushed from the house in undignified haste. In this connection, it may be added that Harry, finding he had collected the two thousand dollars from the insurance company, forced him to return it. Squire Turner saved his reputation by stating that the man who set the house on fire had voluntarily come forward and paid the money, which enabled him to return the sum collected of the company. For this act Squire Turner was made the subject of a complimentary paragraph in the county paper; but it is doubtful if he enjoyed reading it much.

Great was Mrs. Raymond's joy over the lucky turn in her affairs. Between nine and ten thousand dollars were paid her as the proceeds of the land warrant, and this made her quite comfortable. When it was ascertained that Harry had brought a still larger sum from Australia, he became quite a great man in Vernon, and, if he had not been so young, I verily believe he would have been elected to some responsible town office.

But it was not Harry's intention to live in Vernon. He wanted a larger field for his efforts. The next summer he made a visit to England, and was cordially received by Mr. Lindsay, who wished him to remain; but Harry was

unwilling to be separated from his mother. Mr. Lindsay then proposed to Harry on his return to enter a counting-room in New York, to learn business, with a view of establishing a branch of his own house in that city, at a later day, to be under Harry's charge. This proposal was accepted by our hero, who felt that it would be advantageous to him. He removed his mother and sister to New York, as they were unwilling to be separated from him.

It is enough to say that in business Harry exhibited the same qualities which we have already seen in him, and that his mastery of the details was surprisingly rapid. As I write Harry, who is now twenty-one, is about to undertake the charge of the New York branch of Lindsay & Co., which will give him a commanding business position. There are rumors that Maud, whose early preference for him still continues, will, before very long, become the wife of her father's young American representative, and I am inclined to think the report is a true one.

My readers may like to hear how James Turner made out in life. A year since, he obtained the situation of teller in a bank, his father standing surety for him. He soon developed expensive tastes, and finally disappeared, carrying away thirty thousand dollars of the funds of the bank. This loss his father has had to make good, and in consequence, he has become a comparatively poor man, and a very sour, morose man at that. He was compelled to give up his imposing house, and he now lives in the humble cottage formerly occupied by Mrs. Raymond. So the wheel of fortune has turned, and those who were once at the top are now at the bottom. But, for Harry and his mother, we hope many years of happiness are in store. But, if ever reverses should come, we are sure that Harry, keeping in mind his old motto, "SINK OR SWIM," would bear up bravely, and turn defeat into victory.

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